

A FUSION RETRO PUBLICATION

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CRASH! AMIGA

COMMODORE

TIM WRIGHT

The diaries of an AMIGA musician

SCORPION ENGINE

All the latest Scorpion engine game news

DEMOSCENE LEGENDS
with Judge Drok



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A Load of AGA

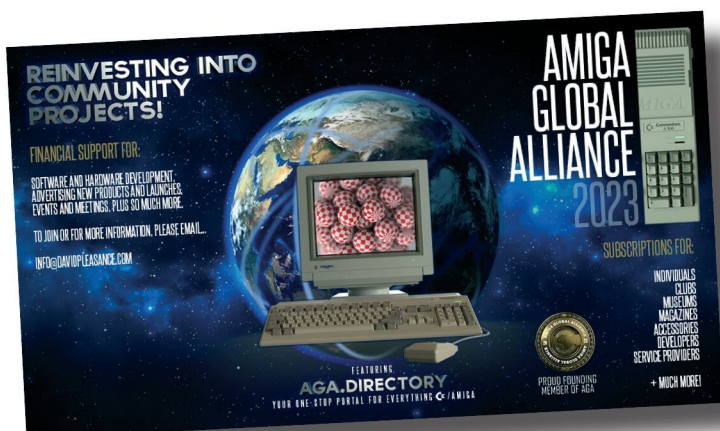


Since the latter half of 2022, a new initiative was building momentum, known as the Amiga Global Alliance, cleverly coined “AGA” (in line with Commodore’s great, but belatedly released, 32-bit AGA chip set).

Headed up by former Commodore UK Managing Director, David Pleasance, it came to a head in June this year, with a Kickstarter launch seeking £15,000, partially for a new website directory, and partially for a fund to be awarded to community projects.

The Kickstarter, in particular, caused much confusion and anger on many community hubs, and it was cancelled just seven days after launch, causing David and his team to have a rethink.

Before reading, and listening to, the many posts



and videos on the matter, my first reaction to the Kickstarter was, “Why?”.

The very idea of a subscription-based, one-stop-shop, ‘directory’ of all things AMIGA is a very 90s one. Thankfully, the Internet is no longer a collection of websites - even the word ‘website’ is becoming an old-fashioned term. We have platforms such as Slack, GDrive, Facebook, YouTube, and many others - all used for different functions, with most being free or donation based. You can create your own world with these platforms, and, within reason, you answer to no one. This is the basis for communities being able to collaborate across oceans and time zones. It is also the foundation for the amazing products, games, and media we are seeing produced for the AMIGA nowadays.

In writing for this magazine, I reach out to many people in the AMIGA

scene in multiple ways, and I’ve needed to join multiple community hubs to achieve this.

For example, this month’s Scorpion Segment article is kindly headed by its creator, Erik Hogan. We often chat on Messenger, share content via email, and I may check out his latest code updates on GitHub. Our guest Scorpion project update this issue comes from Mohammed Malik (msmalik681), who shared the latest from his Street Fighter project on Discord. There is a whole sub-community of Scorpion users on Discord, where ideas, experience, progress, and examples are shared, along with Erik’s updates and guidance. Finally, Mixel has shared his latest progress on Creeping Me Out: Hex Night, with a slant on a couple of Scorpion features. I follow his updates on Discord, but we also communicate on EAB



- another long-standing Amiga developer-focused forum. That covers just one article in our magazine. We touch many different people in many different ways on many platforms.

To even consider herding everyone together under one roof where folks will pay a subscription fee for an old-school directory listing is quite baffling and shows how out of touch David must be with the community and also modern tech in general.

I don't know David, nor any of the team he claims is backing him, and I'm sure he had some good intentions amidst all of this; however, trying to pin multiple communities down to one way of working was never going to be a success. In all honesty, it was a bit embarrassing to launch the Kickstarter in the first place.

Thankfully, the idea seems to have been shut down, and meanwhile the wider AMIGA universe is

better than at any time since those crusty 90s websites.

This month we have six brand new games under the review team's spotlight, and Newsflash announces more on the way. The Scorpion scene is buzzing with activity too, and I am delighted we now have a regular feature covering the platform.

Viva la AMIGA!



You really need to know who to blame! Here is our panel of games reviewers – all kids (at heart)

An avid fan of both the Amstrad CPC and the AMIGA, **CHRIS THACKER** has always believed both machines never reached their full potential in their generations. A guest writer for Crash's 100th Issue as well as features for Popular Retro, The Story of the Commodore AMIGA in Pixels and others, Chris also operates



ThatRetroVideoGamer.com website and YouTube channel and is often found in many an gaming expo hunting down obscure and upcoming retro and indie titles.

MARK MACRAE was hooked on computer games ever since playing Summer Games on the C64 at a friend's 9th Birthday party. This led to him owning his own C64 and, later, an AMIGA. A keen follower of many retro groups and channels, and admin of the Lemon64 Games Competition, Mark is over the moon to be writing for ZZAP! AMIGA after being an avid reader of



ZZAP! 64 since the early issues. He enjoys tinkering with hardware mods and emulation and his favourite AMIGA games are Sensible World of Soccer, IK+ and Defender of the Crown.

ANDREW FISHER honed his gaming skills on the C64 in the 1980s, playing AMIGA at friends' houses and in computer shops. After writing for Commodore Force and Commodore Format in the 1990s, he became a regular contributor to Retro Gamer magazine – adding multiple AMIGAs (and hundreds of 3.5"



disks) to his collection. A big pinball fan, he has also contributed to several retro gaming books including The Story Of The Commodore AMIGA In Pixels, and is also found in the pages of the revived ZZAP! 64.

Hopping across the corridor from ZZAP! 64, **PAUL MORRISON** is a lover of all things Commodore. Despite never owning an AMIGA back in the day, Paul could often be found at his mate's house, playing first on his A500 then his A1200 (which Paul himself now owns). Their combined skills on Silkworm were legendary, but despite growing up in the arcades



his favourite AMIGA games are mostly RPGs, although his love for Rocket Ranger eclipses everything else. A gamer for over forty years, his trusty Zipstik is never too far away – you can never be too prepared!



N·E·W·S f·l·a·s·h·



...with David "Jazzcat" Simmons,
Hot data for vintage hardware!

Castlevania AGA

Another exclusive scoop for ZZAP! AMIGA is on the development of Akumajou *Dracula/Castlevania* AGA.

Let me start by mentioning that recent footage of the game posted on Twitter nearly went viral, with thousands of views. It might be that it reached out of our Amiga niche and got the attention of the general

Castlevania fan base due to the game being a massive franchise created by Konami. It is worth mentioning that the developer, Dante Retro Dev was originally calling this project Akumajou Dracula because it is the original Japanese name of the 1987 *Castlevania*, and to a lesser extent, to sort of get it "under the radar" because it's the "less known name", for safety since it's an active IP. But now that the cat is out of the bag, Dante Retro Dev has decided to move

ahead with *Castlevania* AGA, once and for all. And, like Hoffman said on EAB: "If Konami sends a letter to shut it, I'll frame it and hang it on my wall".

ZZAP! fans can rejoice in these exclusive screenshots kindly provided by Dante; additionally, he took the time to answer some questions I had to get a bit more background on what and when... here we go...

What is the inspiration/motivation to make *Castlevania* AGA?

It's kind of well documented that limited time and budget, compared to the 16-bit consoles, prevented Amiga games from reaching full potential: the "U.S. Gold style" business model went for quantity instead of quality. Original *Castlevania* on the Amiga, released in 1990 by Novotrade, is no different. Saying that it's a letdown is an understatement. When a retro gaming newcomer, unaware of the aforementioned context of the Amiga ports back then, downloads the Amiga full set game library to play





on a modern emulation system such as MiSTer FPGA, they go straight to the games with the largest brand recognition. These are usually *Castlevania*, *Street Fighter 2*, or something from Sega; let's say *OutRun*. All three are absolutely underwhelming conversions that will cause a terrible first impression of the Amiga as a gaming platform. Believe me - I've witnessed that. So, this is the main inspiration. To provide an improved *Castlevania* experience on the system so people could have an idea of 'what could have been' if the source material had been handled more appropriately.

What are the Amiga specifications for it?

It's aimed at A1200 or CD32 (and A4000 too, of course), which I was kind of worried about at first, but then I saw how

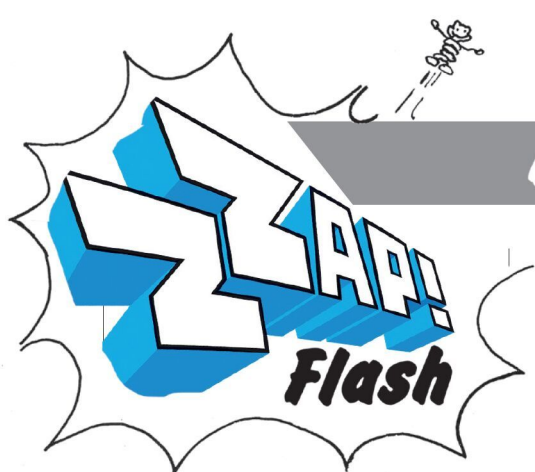
well-received *Turrican 2* AGA by Muzza was (which was already a great game originally), then I got more relaxed. As it's WHDload, it may need that little extra RAM that AGA WHDLoad games usually ask for, but let's see how it goes.

When do you think it will be finished?

I currently got 50% of the game in it (worlds 1, 2, and 3, out of 6 worlds in the original), so I'm shooting for a release later this year. It also depends on the music (which is currently being worked on by the talented Estrayk of Scoopex/Capsule demo scene fame), and that's something I have no idea of how much time it takes. Thanks for the questions; more info and updates should appear soon, as well as a new playable demo containing the three worlds mentioned above!

Well, there you are, read it here first! Keep your eyes on this promising action platformer coming a bit later in 2023. Further info at <https://danteretrodev.itch.io>



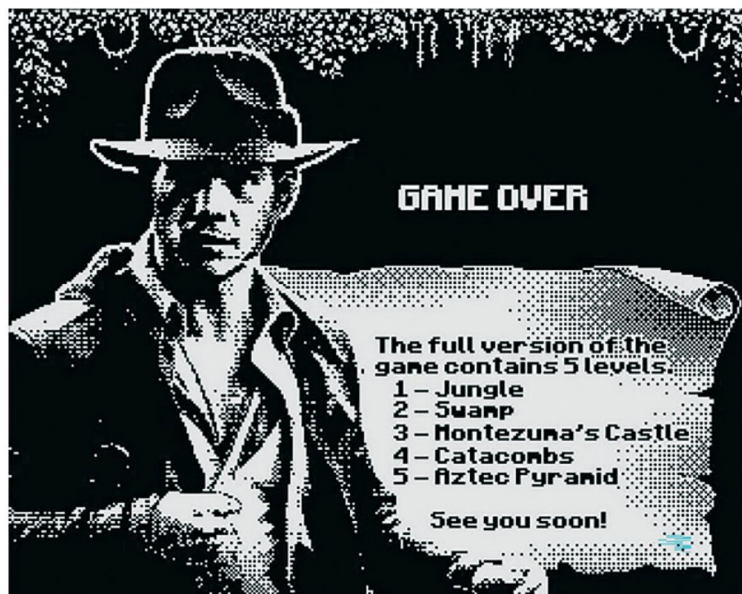


N·E·W·S f·l·a·s·h...



I was woken from my sleep by the sound of a phone that I hadn't heard in a long time. I had just returned from the ancient city of Tula, where I had been exploring old Toltec structures. I instinctively picked up the handset and heard Margaret's sweet, familiar voice, "Tony, are you going to sleep all day?"

TONY - Born for Adventure, is being coded by Pawel 'Tukinem' Tukatsch, and features music by Michal 'Caruso' Brzezicki (with arrangement by XLent),

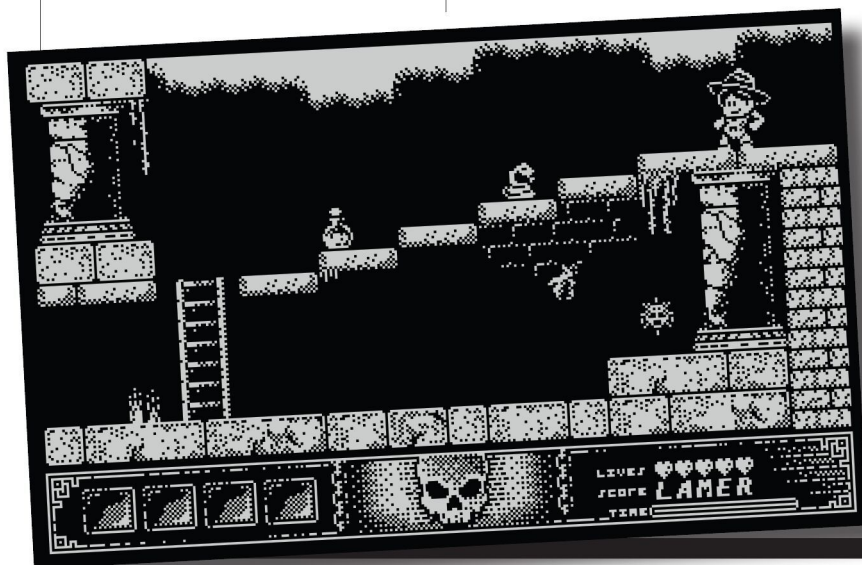


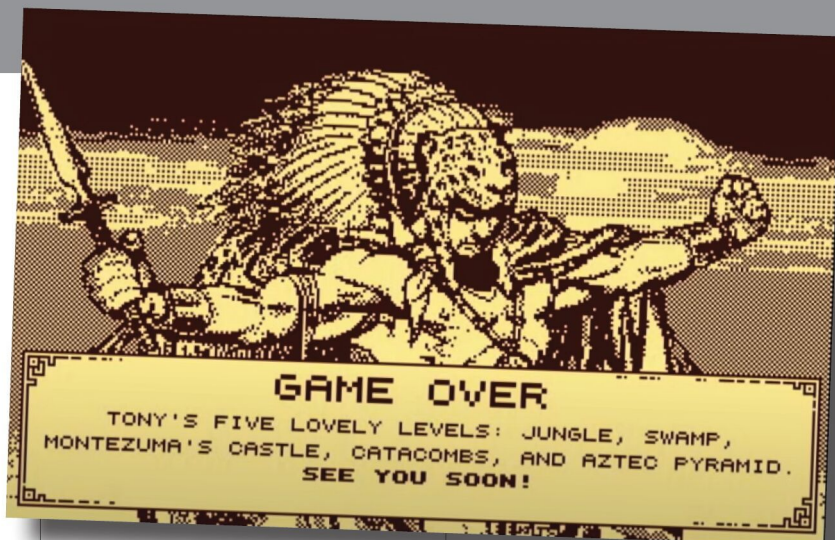
and is designed by Rafal Dudek. It was created after a conversation with Rafal's 10-year-old son, who had been playing Montezuma's Revenge and asked, "Why don't you make a game like this?". The game pays tribute to the Polish explorer Tony Halik and there will be conversions to the C64, Spectrum, and Atari XL computers.

The game

takes place across six varied levels, including Jungle, Swamp, Montezuma's Castle, Catacombs, and finally, the Aztec Pyramid. Each of these levels also has an entrance to a special level called Hell. If Tony survives Hell, he is rewarded by being transported to the final level of the game. Each level will include challenges drawing from the environment, such as falling rocks, jumping peaks, and, in subsequent levels, water, lava, flames, etc.

A demo of the game was unveiled at the Polish AmiParty 29. Further demos of this promising Indiana Jones-style adventure will be released before the game is finalised. *TONY - Born for Adventure* will be available digitally, with a boxed physical edition distributed by Retronics under consideration.





Possible further demos of this promising Indiana Jones-style adventure will be released before the game is finalised towards the end of 2023 (in time for Christmas). *TONY – Born for Adventure* will be available digitally (a boxed physical edition distributed by Retronics is still to be determined if achievable).

Amiga Global Alliance

The Amiga Global Alliance was recently announced on Kickstarter, with the project being spearheaded by David John Pleasance.

The funding was for the construction, administration, and support of a one-stop-shop for the Amiga, under the secured domain name “AGA.Directory”, to include forums, Amiga tech support, a directory of contacts, and more.

The team behind the project announced on Kickstarter: “Our mission is to construct the most all-inclusive platform that fully embodies the rich diversity and exceptional talent that our global community has to offer. This platform is set to become a thorough resource, featuring listings and URL links to

any individual or company providing services to our community, no matter where in the world they’re located.

For the first time ever, we’re rallying Amiga enthusiasts, Commodore/Amiga clubs, developers, animators, repairers, wholesalers, shops, magazines, authors, component suppliers, webmasters, musicians, 3D artists, and more, from every corner of the globe, to collaborate together.”

Another push to monetise the scene? A genuine community service? The community was divided on the matter, and passionate posts by established individuals who strongly opposed this project, were spread far and wide across various social media platforms.

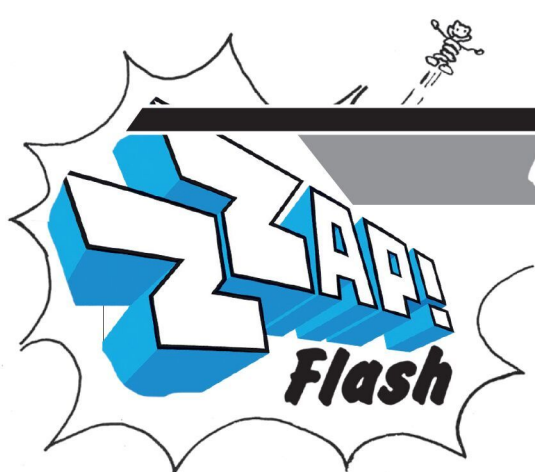
In mid-June, under immense pressure and negative publicity, David pulled the pin on the Kickstarter, announcing on

Facebook that the project would not continue and apologising for any trouble he may have caused.

Was this project trying to solve a problem that didn’t exist? A scam for money? We will never know. What it has highlighted is that there is a strong community with passionate support for the Amiga, proving yet again that there is certainly a lot of life left in this old beast yet.

Further information on Amiga Global Alliance can be found at: <https://kickstarter.com/projects/amigaglobalalliance/announcing-a-brand-new-aga-for-2023-amiga-global-alliance>





N.E.W.S F.l.a.s.h...

Geezer Games

After the successful *Turbo Sprint*, *Rygar* and *Devil's Temple*, what's next for Geezer Games?

Well, Graeme Cowie (McGeezer) and Christophe Romagnoli (TenShu) have been working on a little project that you can read about here first.

Introducing *Geezer Games*, a *Hyper Sports* and *Track and Field* clone for the AGA. What's the inspiration? McGeezer writes:

"Those games never appeared on the Amiga, so it would be good to bring them to the machine."

The name is fitting. It was

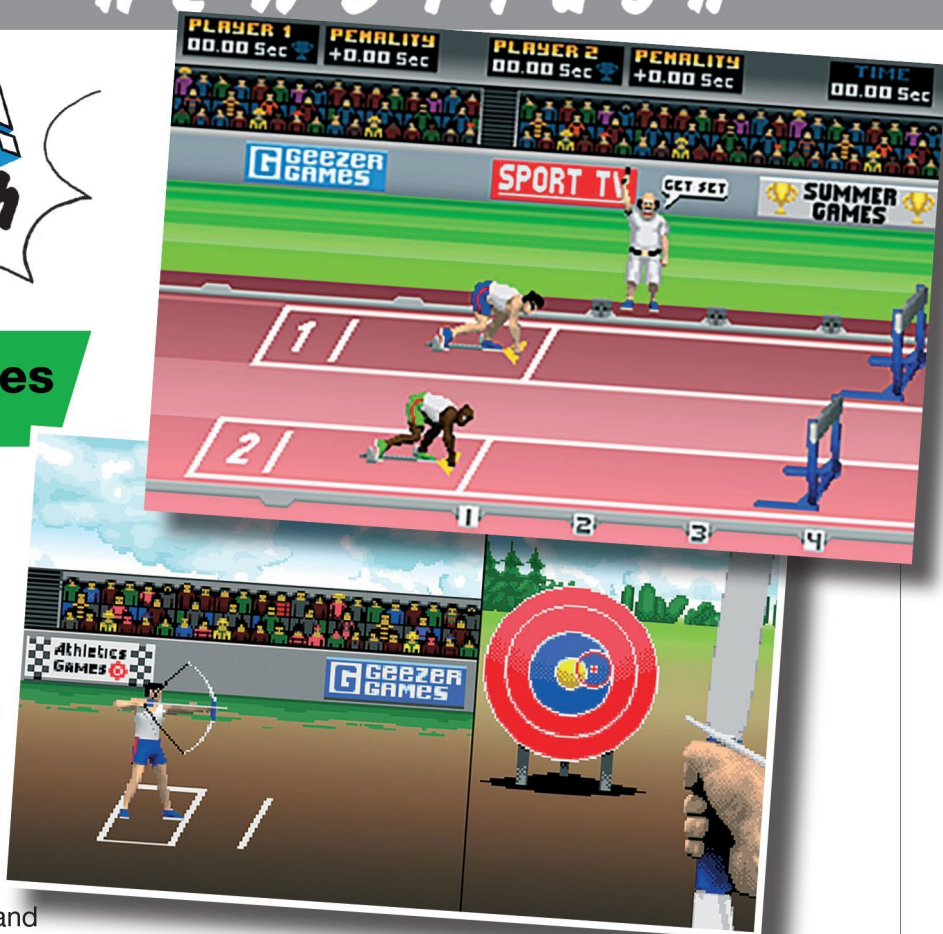
the brainchild of TenShu, who proposed it to McGeezer who was happy with it (naming a child was never so easy!).

Geezer Games features 8 events: Swimming, Skeet,

Boxing, Archery, Pole Vault, Hurdles, Javelin, Triple Jump, and Weightlifting.

The game has been designed for the stock Amiga 1200 and can accommodate up to 4 players.

Still in the early conception phase, it has unfortunately been placed on hold. But, dear reader, don't you worry... McGeezer tells us that it will be revisited once his desk has been cleared of a few existing priorities (yay!), and he may consider resuming development in 2024 (rhooarrrr!!!).





The **ZZAP!** Interview

Mark caught up with **Old_Bob (aka Scott Jensen)**, developer of the splendiferous AMIGA *Tapper* conversion. Scott hails from Dundee, Scotland and is usually found programming, playing guitar, possibly zipping around on his motorbike when it occasionally doesn't rain.

When did you start the Tapper project, and why?

I started the game, in earnest, January 9th 2020.

I had fiddled around with some small test programs to confirm the blitter could manage the game at 50fps, which it could, with a bit of time to spare at maximum load. With that known, the first part I worked on was the routine for filling the logo up with beer.

My motivation for making it was, simply, so I could play it. Playing the coin-op in MAME, it always bugs me with its slightly sluggish feel and 30fps, so I wanted to make a 50fps game with faster, more responsive gameplay.

What language/toolset did you use to develop the game?

The game was programmed completely in 68000 assembly language, using Sublime Text 2, and cross-assembled using VASM on my Windows 10 box. I also used the Amiga AsmPro assembler for some little odds and ends along the way.

The code was tested and debugged entirely in WinUAE, as well as

additional playtesting on my A600. Use of WinUAE was absolutely central to making the game. I can't imagine the horrors involved in debugging the code using any other approach.

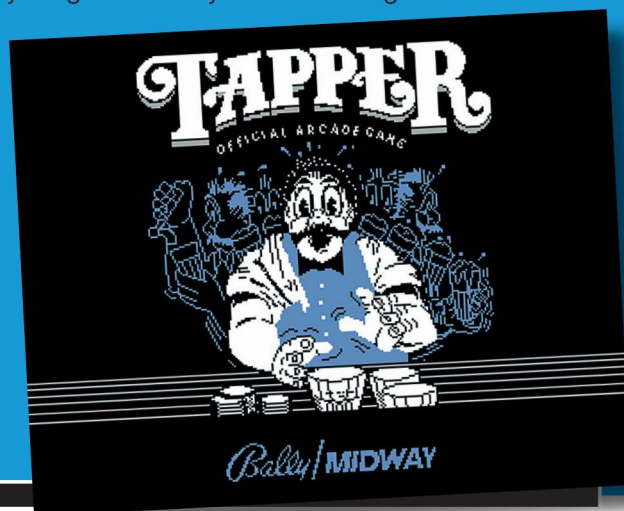
For graphics, things were complicated due to the unhelpful 512x480 screen resolution the coin op uses. The backgrounds could be grabbed easily using MAME and Paint Shop Pro as they are 256x240, half resolution. The sprites, however, needed to be completely redone. Simply taking the game's graphics and resizing them down from 32x32 to 16x16 produced nothing but an unusable mess. The only thing to do was to redraw everything in the game in *Amiga Deluxe Paint*, using grabs from the game as a starting guide to work from. These were then exported using the excellent PicCon utility. As it turned out, I would spend

more time doing this than I did actually writing the program.

The audio was grabbed from MAME, then converted to an Amiga-friendly sample rate and bit depth using Sonic Foundry Soundforge, as well as the Amiga Soundbox utility.

How did you balance coding the game with your day job?

I wasn't working when I began making the game; I later started a new job which used up a fair amount of the time I could devote to the game. Since then, I've changed jobs another three times, as well as moving home to another city. So, when they say that real life will get in the way of your homebrew project, they are not wrong!



Tapper

Old_Bob — 2023

£free to download

You're behind the bar at the busiest pub in town, and all your colleagues have taken the night off and left you to it. Even the glass collector is off sick! To make matters worse, there are four bars to look after, each with ever-increasingly thirsty customers. Thankfully, there is only one drink on offer - Budweiser Beer!

Your job is to run up and down each bar, pulling and sliding beers down for the customers and collecting glasses before they fall off the bar. The thirsty beer swillers walk up the bar towards you, and sliding them a beer pushes them back slightly before pausing while they down it in one! If your skills are on top form, you can eventually push all the punters out of the bar completely, thus winning the round.

Each round gets progressively more difficult, with more drinkers and more complex bar layouts. To help, some customers may leave a tip, which, when collected, brings out the dancing girls, which distracts some customers, giving you a bit of respite. But, be aware - distracted customers cannot catch



drinks, and any customers who are drinking or being pushed back at the start of the show will never be distracted.

As an



interlude between rounds, a masked fairground figure shakes five out of six cans on a table. You must follow the unshaken can and pick it correctly to win the bonus points. Selecting any other can will have beer sprayed up in your face!

My first exposure to this game came with the superb C64 version in 1985, and I've played many variations since, including all the arcade versions. It's great, then, to see it on the Amiga, although it's not quite the heady brew you'd hope for. First impressions are good, as it looks and sounds great, but once you start playing it, you realise immediately that there's an issue. You play as the Usain Bolt of bartenders! While that might sound great, given the whole idea of the game is to get around the bar as quickly as possible, the advantage it gives you is so unfair that, for me, it spoils the game. It's a shame, because everything else is spot on!

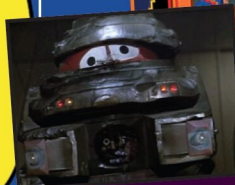




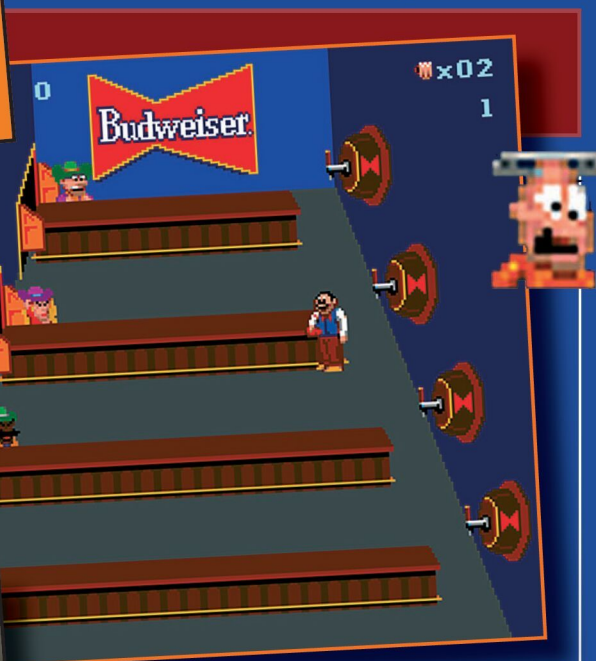
Get the game here



As soon as news of this arcade port dropped, I scribbled my name down to review it, as I have always been a fan of both the arcade original and the C64 port. The AMIGA version is practically arcade perfect, except for the odd animation sequence that only avid fans would miss (such as the little dance the barman does after clearing a screen). The game plays quicker than the arcade due to the enhanced frame rate and more responsive controls, which at first, I admit, I wasn't a fan of, but grew to appreciate after a few goes. This is clearly a labour of love, with amazing attention to detail. However, the initial buzz of playing Tapper on the AMIGA wanes as it's lacking something new to keep the interest there.



The Old_Bob handle comes from the old beat-up robot in Disney's *Black Hole* film, you can just about make it out in Scott's avatar pic on the EAB Forum. His favourite cinema robot.



PRESENTATION 78%

Simple title screen, high score table, and difficulty settings.

GRAPHICS 77%

Close to arcade perfect, but then the arcade game is 40 years old.

SOUND 70%

The jolly, but simple tunes and SFX have been faithfully reproduced. Perhaps a modern soundtrack could be a nice optional extra.

HOOKABILITY 80%

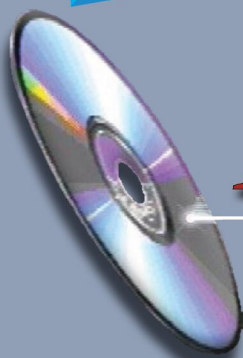
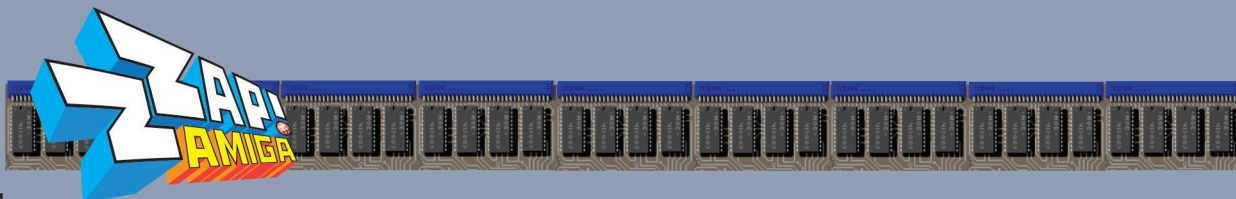
It's a great version of Tapper, so easy to get pulling pints.

LASTABILITY 63%

The initial fizz goes a bit flat after a few sips.

OVERALL 70%

A great port of an arcade classic which could do with a slice of added lime, for the modern age.



AMIGA

CD-ROM



Welcome to ZZAP! Amiga-Tech, where we take a look at some of the more interesting and unusual pieces of hardware that were released for the Amiga. This issue, Colin Bell talks CD-ROMs, and takes a look at the A570 CDTV add-on and the rarest piece of Amiga hardware in existence, the CD1200.

A570

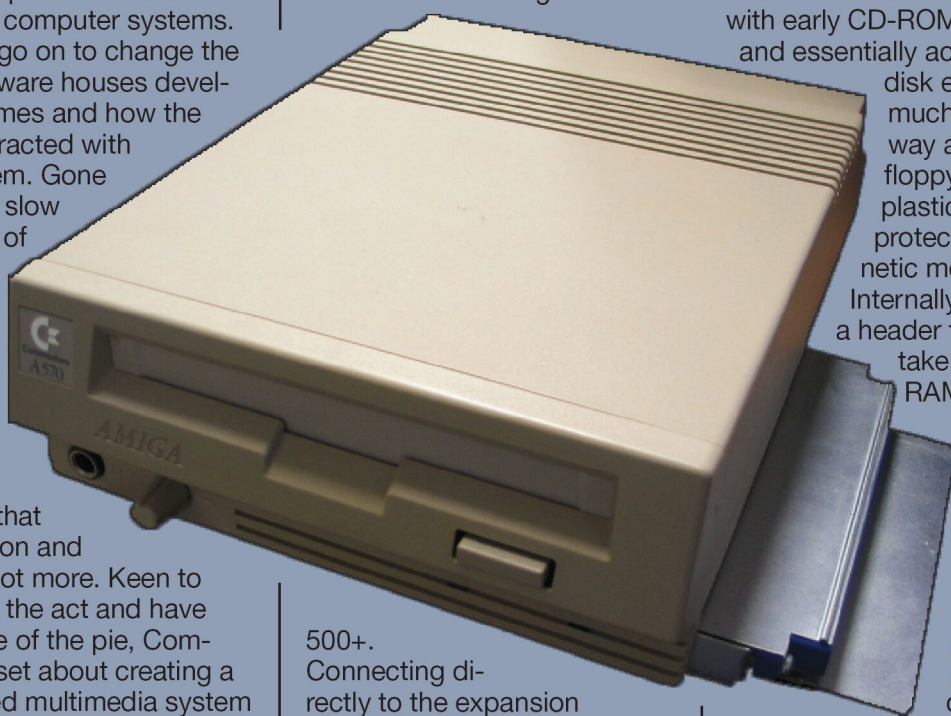
During the early Nineties, CD-ROM technology began to appear for several console and computer systems. It would go on to change the way software houses developed games and how the user interacted with the system. Gone were the slow old days of swapping disk after disk, for a single CD could store all that information and a whole lot more. Keen to get in on the act and have their slice of the pie, Commodore set about creating a CD-based multimedia system called CDTV, as well as a single-unit add-on designated

the A570. Originally called the A690 before being changed just prior to its release, the A570 was an external single-speed CD-ROM unit designed to be used with the Amiga 500 &

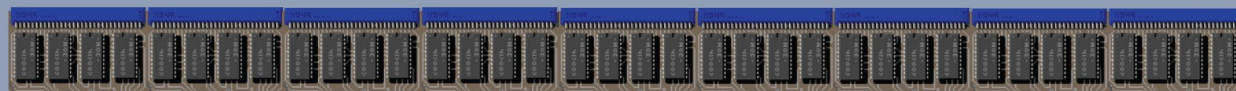
the unit featured a headphone volume control, headphone jack, power, access LEDs, and a plastic caddy case in which you put your CD media. This was a common feature with early CD-ROM drives and essentially acted as a

disk enclosure, much like the way a 3.5" floppy disk has a plastic jacket that protects the magnetic media inside. Internally there was a header that could

take a 2MB fast RAM expansion, although this was never released commercially, and only a few rare developer examples are known to exist. You can,



500+. Connecting directly to the expansion port located to the left-hand side of the Amiga's keyboard,



however, thanks to some wonderful people who have reverse-engineered the card, now buy them on eBay. This will give your A500 a much-needed RAM boost and allow you to play most games and demos straight from the RAM itself.

WELCOME TO THE FUTURE

So, you've spent your hard earned cash on a flashy new A570 CD-ROM drive and plugged it into your A500, switched it on and have been greeted by the awesome CDTV title screen with its futuristic spinning logo and glowing laser. But now what? Well, like most CD devices, you could listen to your own audio CDs, the sound quality of which was absolutely excellent. Inserting an audio CD also brought up a cool looking interface which displayed the number of tracks on the CD

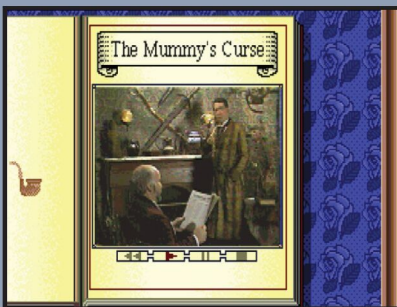


Above: The futuristic audio interface, and had a number of buttons that activated standard functions, such as repeat and randomise. A more unusual function was the ability to play the first ten seconds of every track so that you could preview the CD you were listening to. There was also

a CD-G button which enabled the playing of CD-G CDs, which would display a graphics side-show while the music played, although this type of CD format was very rare and limited.

You could, of course, play one of the many CDTV software titles, most of which were, sadly, pants. *Psycho Killer* is one that springs to mind, and has to be played to be believed.

There were a few gems worth playing, however. *Defender of the Crown II*, for example, is a fantastic sequel that improves on the first game and features some glorious graphics and CD quality sound. Then there's *Sherlock Holmes: Consulting Detective*, which features some stunning Full Motion Video sequences with real actors. A rather nice version of *Sim City* was also released on CDTV, with improved sound and graphics and the option to play the game in the different eras, such as me-



Above: *Defender of the Crown II* & *Sherlock Holmes*. Two of the better CDTV titles.

NEW!
CDTV DRIVE

AMIGA ADD-ON
FOR A500 & A600



Commodore has released their new CDTV drives for the Amiga 500 and 600 computers. Simply plug the drive onto your Amiga and you have the power to:

- **USE THE SUCCESSFUL RANGE OF CDTV SOFTWARE.** A vast array of titles are available now and more are being released all the time. With the CD's ability to retrieve 540Mb of data (over 610 Amiga floppy disks!), it is the ideal media for software based around entertainment, music, education, reference and much more!
- **PLAY NORMAL AUDIO CDs.** The high quality CD Player (8 x over sampling) outputs sound quality that is equal to the best top end CD player available today. The CDTV drive gives you the ability to program the CD Player on-screen to select random play, pre-set play order and much more.
- **PLAY AND SEE CD-G CDs.** Not only do you get high quality audio but CD+G (Compact Disk + Graphics) produces graphics on screen while the track is playing. These graphics are usually based on the theme of the track or can be the lyrics of the song.

A570 CDTV Drive for A500 Kickstart 2.04	A570 for A500 Kickstart 1.3 Inc. Kickstart 2. upgrade	A670 CDTV Drive for A600 Kickstart 2.05
£299	£349	£299
REF: CCD 0570	REF: CCD 0583	REF: CCD 0677

Above: An advert for the new A570 CDTV Drive, and its price tag.

dieval times or in the Wild West. A great family offering for the CDTV is *Trivial Pursuit*, again an improved version of the original but with some wicked animations and additional photo and music based question rounds.

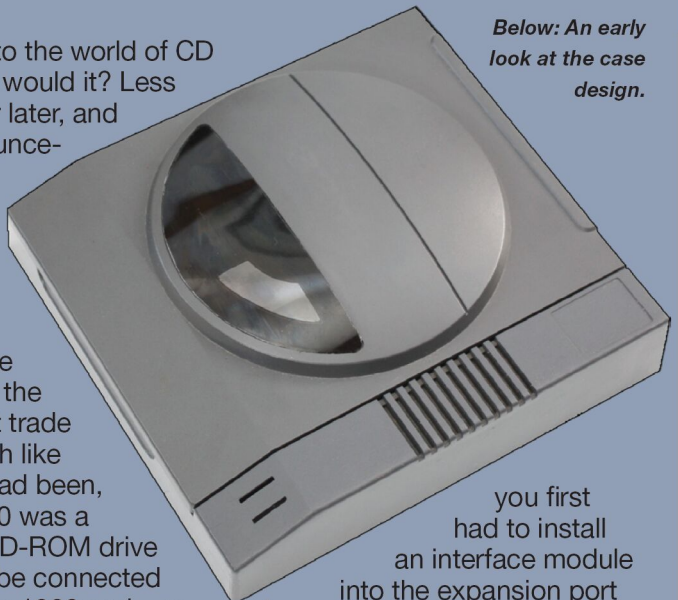
Another great use for the A570 was being able to load programs directly from CD when in Workbench. There were also a number of great PD game and demo compilation CDs produced, many of which you can still download and play for free today. Or, if you fancy, you can burn your own games to CD as well if you have the right software and know-how. Be sure, though, to use only CD-R-type CDs, and make sure you burn everything at low speeds: x1, x2 for the best results.

The A570 is a great addition to any Commodore collection, and I highly recommend the RAM expansion to make sure you get the full benefit of the device.

CD1200

While the A570 and CDTV system may not have been as successful as Commodore had hoped, it still didn't deter them from looking to the future. Rumours were rife, and many of the magazines of the time were reporting leaked news that Commodore were developing a new CD games console that featured the then-new AGA chipset. This, of course, was the CD32 which eventually launched in September 1993, and according to Commodore, it would be their only en-

deavour into the world of CD media... or would it? Less than a year later, and in an announcement that shook the computer world, Commodore unveiled the CD1200 at the 1994 CeBit trade show. Much like the A570 had been, the CD1200 was a separate CD-ROM drive that could be connected to an Amiga 1200 and was



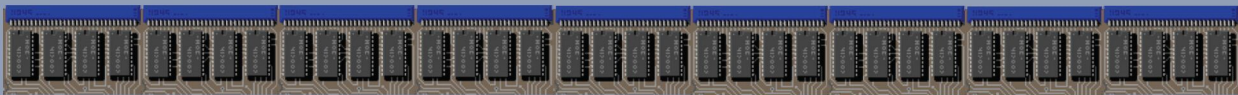
Below: An early look at the case design.

dubbed 'the CD32 expansion for your A1200'. In fact if you look at the shape of the drive, you can clearly see that it's the same as the CD32 but colour matched to the A1200's colour scheme. To connect the drive to the A1200,

you first had to install an interface module into the expansion port located under the keyboard and then route a 'Data Input' cable up and behind the floppy drive where it came out the back of the A1200 and connected to the CD1200. The interface module was required to handle the fast data transfer and access to the drive itself. Audio-wise, the drive accepted Amiga audio signals and merged them with the CD-audio, giving you that high-quality stereo sound that came with the CD32. Ever looking to the future, Commodore incorporated a SIMM socket for memory expansions of up to 4 MB, and there was even room for a CPU upgrade as well. There was even talk of a CD drive for the Amiga 4000 that would arrive later in the year and that these would have Full Motion Video (FMV) compatibility built-in, since the A4000 towers had room for an MPEG card expansion. But for now, it was



Left: Exciting times! Amiga Format Issue 59 featured an exclusive look at the CD1200.



the CD1200 that was set to be released in Germany that very May, and with the future looking bright for Commodore, it would seem that they had established the Amiga as one of the greatest home computer systems in the world. So what happened? Why did the CD1200 never materialise?

BANKRUPTCY

Just one month before the scheduled release of the CD1200, Commodore International filed for bankruptcy. This was, in part, due to an injunction put in place over patent royalties that prevented Commodore from selling the CD32 in the United States, combined with poor sales in Europe. This, of course, meant the CD1200 was never released either, and the plan to use it to boost CD32 and A1200 sales of software and hardware never came to fruition. A shame, as it could have ultimately saved the company from bankruptcy.

GONE BUT NOT FORGOTTEN

So what of the CD1200? Clearly, there were prototypes made, but where are they? Well, according to the lead project engineer, Beth Richard, who worked on the development of the CD1200, there were only a total of nine CD drives made, eight of which disappeared during the collapse of Commodore.

This left only one, which remained lost for the best part of twenty-plus years before eventually being uncovered in a dusty barn by a member of the Leicester Retro Computer Museum who, at first, didn't realise what they had found and just how incredibly rare the CD drive was. In fact, the one remaining CD1200 unit is quite possibly the rarest piece of Commodore Amiga hardware in existence.

long before Sony would release their hugely successful PlayStation console, which, as well as featuring an in-built CD drive, also offered 3D hardware acceleration, 16-bit 24-channel stereo sound, and could handle Full Motion Video (FMV). And it's that which makes me believe that Commodore would have most likely struggled to compete with Sony and, indeed, the rapid develop-



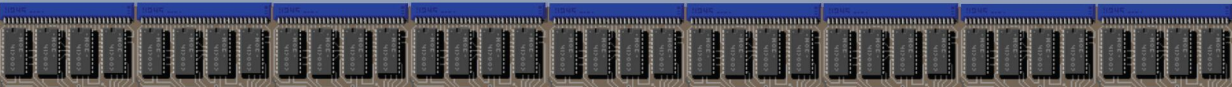
Above: The CD1200 attached to an Amiga 1200 at the 1994 CeBit computer trade show. Oh what could have been...

SAVIOUR?

It has often been said that, had the CD1200 been released and the CD32 console sold well in the United States, then Commodore may have been able to stave off the looming bankruptcy and continue as a company at the forefront of home computing. To be honest, though, I'm not so sure, for we have to remember that it wouldn't be

ment of PC CD, processor, and graphics hardware.

There has been talk of recreating the CD1200 by opening the one remaining and attempting to reproduce its internal workings and expansion module, but nothing has materialised yet. In the meantime, why not visit the Retro Computer Museum in Leicester and check out this rare little device for yourself?



Specs : Any AMIGA (emulator or real hardware).

Get the game here



TENEBRA 2

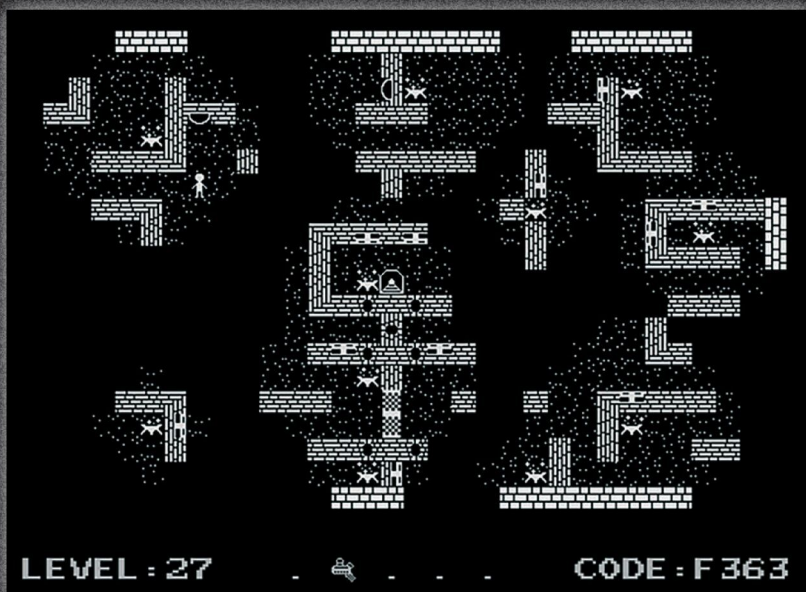
Haplo — 2023

£free to download

It's cold. An eerie sense of foreboding lingers in the darkness, making me feel like I'm trapped in a deep, dark dungeon with no escape. Well, there's no way you're getting me walking through those dark areas, not without a flashlight or something to illuminate the way. Not that I don't trust you, mind, it's just, well... let's just say the flashlight is non-negotiable. Oh, look, the exit! Let's hope this is the way out, not a route to more darkness... Damn.

Tenebra 2, the sequel to *Tenebra* released for the C64 back in 2021 and reviewed for the AMIGA in just the previous issue, follows the same formula of avoiding traps, collecting keys and torches, and solving puzzles that will test your patience and logic, but adds more levels, more challenges, and more graphic options. You can choose between the classic 8-bit look (non-interlaced) or the enhanced look (interlaced), which makes the game look more like its modern indie brethren, but still keeping its original charm.

Now that's not to say



Tenebra 2 is a game for everyone. It's a game for those who enjoy retro puzzle games with a twist of horror and mystery. A title for



those who don't mind trying over and over again until they figure out the solution. It's a game for those who have a lot of time and patience to spare. Yet with 35 chapters to master, and a code system in place to enable you to easily continue should the

I asked when the sequel was arriving in my Tenebra review, and here it is! The first few levels are a brilliant reminder of the concept, and things go up a gear with the portal gun's introduction. It's a clever tool, and it stretches the brain once you also get collapsing arches to trap you and rail sections to repair. The moody graphics are pretty much the same as before, with the extra spooky sounds optional. It's more than a repeat of what went before, though, with new ideas giving brilliant "Eureka" moments. I loved completing this sequel - when's the next game due, Haplo?



I've been trying to pigeonhole this title since playing. Part Rogue-like, part puzzler, with a sprinkling of dark horror lingering in its code, I've certainly had fun slowly running through the levels, watching each solution become more taxing as I progress. Yet what delights me is seeing a sequel which clearly showcases that a great concept and gameplay can still be improved rather than rehashed for a quick release. I look forward to seeing what Haplo tantalises us with next!



solution to a puzzle stump you for too long.

Oh, did I mention the portal gun puzzles? No... ah, don't worry I'm sure you'll figure out the solution.

The soundscape is eerie and atmospheric, adding to the ambience of each chapter, from the winds blowing periodically to the slow, sludgy stomp of your feet as you wander the darkened spaces searching for the next potential passage. The graphics keep to a monochrome palette throughout your adventure, but if anything, this design choice adds to the overall

presentation, making even the smallest changes of screen something worthy of an investigation.

If you're looking for a fun and relaxing game, this is not for you. But if you're looking for a twisted puzzler that'll keep you on the edge, challenging you each time with its devilish routes which seem so obvious once illuminated, then *Tenebra 2* should already be on your download list to check out.

PRESENTATION 86%

Well presented, choice of original or enhanced graphics, shortcut keys, and the passwords are a great touch.

GRAPHICS 77%

As per the original game. A monochrome flickering treat adding to the ambience.

SOUND 75%

Eerie, minimalist sound and effects work well.

HOOKABILITY 89%

If you've not played the first game, the refresher levels ease you into the dungeon delving

LASTABILITY 86%

35 levels of mental gymnastics with the new tools, and it will leave you eager for more.

OVERALL 85%

Keep the midnight oil burning, this is devilishly fun to solve and a worthy sequel.

C N

TENEBRA REFRESHER-1

-GET TO THE GATE (A)
-YOU CAN ONLY WALK IN LIT AREAS
-TORCHES : CAN BE CARRIED. STAND
OVER THEM & PRESS FIRE TO PICK
THEM UP. PRESS FIRE AGAIN TO
DROP THEM
-YOU CAN GO THROUGH THE CRACKS
IN THE WALL IF YOU ARE NOT
HOLDING A TORCH

DURING THE GAME:

-R: RESTART LEVEL
-F: TOGGLE FLICKER
-S: TOGGLE AMBIENT SOUND

LEVEL: 01

CODE: B9D7



AMIGA

Art

Simon ^{by} Butler

I decided to shake things up again this month and do a special on one of the artists who has caught my eye recently. So here we have an exceptionally

creative and uber-talented exponent of the pixelated paintbrush from Poland, Radosław Wasielewski...

1: Loneliness

There is a loose, sketchy feel about this piece that impresses me from the start. It's almost like a preparatory sketch, yet the lines are so confidently plotted that any excess over-work would detract from the whole.

The sombre palette fits the title perfectly without slipping into clichéd shades of blue or grey.

The angle of the head and the feet that are tucked in so close to the body suggest detachment and sorrow, regardless of the character possessing delicate and beautiful butterfly wings.

Mood pieces can fall into obvious motifs, yet here the incongruous fantasy figure gives you pause for thought and ultimately adds more weight to the subject matter.

A lovely start.



2: Just Keep Hope Alive

Hope seems a million miles away for the trio in this image. They are emaciated and drained of life, connected by threads of matter, and their forms are slowly embracing the shapes of the rocks that surround them. The ruined cityscape to the left is perhaps a memory of days past, and all they have left is the lamp glowing in the twisted hands of the central figure.

Hope is perhaps the wrong word, for within this lambent construct are illuminated figures with outstretched arms, imploring within their bright prison.

It's a strange and confusing image, but perhaps this is the intention. To unsettle the viewer and raise more questions than answers.

Whatever the goal, it is masterfully crafted and wonderfully disturbing.



3. Frozen By Paralyzing Flashes

We love portals - doorways to alternate universes or other times, and here we have as fine an example as one could wish for.

A solitary traveller looks back momentarily at what? Someone reluctant to follow or a world that will never be revisited.

The deep scarlet tones normally connected to the lifeblood here seem simply regal, adding a sombre finality to the image. The almost liquid shapes within the centre circle seem to surround a brilliant pathway leading outward and up toward the disturbing mechanical shape floating above the lone figure.

Dark and exceptionally atmospheric, this is a fine piece, superbly crafted.



4: Deepness

There is a lot going on in this image which perhaps explains the title.

A single bolt of lightning strikes the ocean's surface while a girl sinks toward the shadowy depths.

Behind her, and obviously not in any way connected to the watery environment, is one staring emerald eye with a single tear falling, in some way mirroring the downward passage of the female form.

Conversely, bubbles are rising upwards, and slightly to the left in the lightest area is a cracked or possible scaled texture, drawn in the faintest of lines.

The combination of elements is engrossing and the use of colour or lack thereof is masterful. As with all of these examples interpretation is subjective, but the bottom line is that these are the works of someone comfortable with their craft and with a lot to say and who says whatever it is with style.



KALLE KLOAKK

Megastyle — 2023 / £free to download

Back in primary school, I once found myself locked in the school toilets. Just me, the distant noises of kids heading back to class, and sheets of that shiny tracing paper (that stuff we used to have as an excuse for toilet paper) stuck to the floor. Thankfully a teacher found me, and helped me get back to my hysterical classmates!

Something similar has happened to *Kalle Kloakk* whilst visiting the mall. During an urgent trip to the toilet, something went wrong and the lock to the bathroom door jammed! *Kalle Kloakk* looked around and discovered a window. He checked the room to see if there were any objects he could stack under the window, so it would be possible to climb up and escape... and there they were: the toilet paper rolls (good job it wasn't the tracing paper).

Unfortunately, *Kalle Kloakk* doesn't seem to learn his lesson, as there are eight toilets to escape from. In each room, there will be a varying number of toilet rolls at different heights. You control the height



of each object (which look like sections of the floor) by timing the fire button as they move up and down. Bad timing means *Kalle Kloakk* cannot reach the next level, but good timing means you have



a smooth passage to collecting the toilet rolls and eventually reaching the window to fresh air, before getting locked in the next toilet!

Controls are fairly straightforward, with the joystick used to move *Kalle Kloakk*, and pressing fire will set the platforms. Good muck (Ed: we mean luck)!

Having played the C64 original, I knew what to expect. And that meant on my first go I nearly completed this. It's not a deep, involved scenario, and it won't bowl you over. It's easy to wipe away your chances with a mistimed press and leave yourself in deep... trouble. I do like the fact that Megastyle is extending its reach to the Amiga, but this needs to be the starting point to build from. I'll put a lid on my expectations and take a seat until they release a great Amiga game.



Get the game here



Andrew has used most of the toilet puns up, but one more from me just to say I have never finished so quickly! Unlike Andrew, I had never played the C64 version and had no idea what to expect. The first round has no toilet paper to collect, so it took a while to work out what was going on. I actually thought the game hadn't loaded properly. Then, no sooner was I getting into the action than the game was completed! To be fair, the concept probably has some legs but needs a lot more adding to it before it can become a viable option. A good effort, but thank the Lord it's freeware!

Kalle Kloakk Trivia



The name of this game has a long history. Back in 1990, the Megastyle team released a C64 demo entitled Kalle Kloakk - also known as Looking For Toilet Paper In Several Wrong Places. Friends from outside the group, who were not demo sceners at the time, contributed graphics. One part called Vertical Insanity replicated an effect from the Amiga demo of the same name by Razor 1911.

And then, in 2018, Megastyle entered the RESET64 Craptastic 4K Coding Competition with a game also called Kalle Kloakk. It achieved 7th place and was the inspiration for this - the first Amiga game from the group. Google translates the name Kalle Kloakk as "call sewage" - which you might need to do if you are locked in the bathroom without enough toilet paper.



PRESENTATION 52%

Nice title screen and some basic instructions.

GRAPHICS 51%

The only backdrop is well drawn, and the promising sprites are let down by the lack of variety.

SOUND 60%

The lack of any sound FX is compensated for by a rather nice SID-style tune.

HOOKABILITY 57%

Extremely easy to get into, once you grasp what you are meant to be doing.

LASTABILITY 35%

Just not much of a game to have any lasting appeal whatsoever.

OVERALL 44%

Getting out of the bathroom has never been so easy.

AMIGA Bookshelf

For all you Amiga fans, there are lots of great books out there. **ANDREW FISHER** looks at another release that covers this classic machine.

CRACKERS - CHAPTER 2: THE DATA STORM

Published by: Microzeit Publishing
RRP: € 39.90 plus shipping



This is the crowdfunded follow-up to chapter 1, The Gold Rush. As noted in our review of that title, the original plan for a single book was split into two volumes.

This second volume starts in 1990, with an overview of the C64 cracking scene written

by David Almer before continuing with a chronological history of the whole scene. Short galleries and features break up the main text, including a look at copy protection schemes on Amiga and ST, and a piece on the hard-to-photocopy

materials included with many games (such as code wheels and manual text look-up). The American BBS scene is analysed, along with many details about the French cracking group the Replicants and a look at the Barras Market in Glasgow, Scotland (where police officers raided the market stalls offering pirate software, or brought their own software from them).

The history concludes by looking at the rise of consoles and the specialist copying hardware, before the large interview section (covering 90 pages). This contains several



large discussions with well-known crackers, talking about their scene history and what they learned. The first interview is perhaps the most interesting, talking to someone on the other side of the debate - Rob Northen, copy protection expert and creator of the CopyLock protection schemes.

As with the first volume, the presentation is excellent - from the gold-embossed cover to the range of screenshots, images, and photos. There is also a short feature

card and bookmark with two separate "goodies" packs available through the Microzeit shop at €7,50 each.

The text is informative and detailed, although there are a few minor problems

in translation and transcription. Sometimes the syntax and expressions are clearly from a German speaker transferred into English, which can slow down the flow. But in general, it is well-written and easy to understand.

This is another strong publication from Microzeit, telling an interesting story and giving some fascinating anecdotes about the cracking scene and its history.



on ASCII/ANSI art with some clever examples, disk diagrams (and X-Copy screenshots) explaining how copy protection worked, and a gallery of swappers' letters. As an Indiegogo backer, I received an art



DEMOSCENE

LEGENDS

Welcome to Demoscene Legends, the place where I celebrate the culture, creativity, and pure excitement of the golden period of the Amiga demoscene. A time when legends were born, and jaws dropped to the floor. I'm Judge Drok, and today we diversify a little and celebrate one of the most important visual elements of any demoscene release - the logo.

So, why is a logo important? Because it grabs attention, can make a strong first impression, and is the foundation of your group identity, it can be memorable and separate you from the competition. At least, that's what I think. In this modern age, symbols have overtaken full-form logos, as Facebook, Twitter, McDonald's, and Apple show - all you need is a symbol. We recognise and identify them in an instant, but they're hardly the height of cultural creativity. Shorthand simplicity is the key here. They are around us for years, often decades, with little to no change in their designs. Bar a few exceptions, the artistic side of the demoscene is quite the opposite. A brand identity that would often metamorphose between each release. Demoscene artists lived to create, and

inspiration came from everything from natural elements through to film, TV, and comic books. From the almost uncountable creative output of the scene, many of these works become etched into the memory and became an identifier of a group or a demo release. K8_bit (Kate Lorimer) recalls the classic Fairlight logo, "as seen in something I believe the cool kids called 'Cracktros', whatever they were, it's as much an Amiga stalwart as the Triad 'Dealer Quality Software' logo was on the C64". The concept of the demoscene logo is being celebrated in the book 'Demoscene: The Logo Art' from Editions 64k, and here the author of that book, along with myself and other key personalities, share their favourite logos from the Amiga scene, each one a cherished colophon of creativity.



Stolen Data : Havok

Stolen Data was a paper and disk magazine produced by Anarchy in cooperation with Tristar and the Donut Cracking Services team. Havok was a talented British artist who not only provided this logo for the disk magazine's intro, but also reviewed art gallery submissions for the magazine along with fellow digital paint-slinger, Raphael. This logo is obviously inspired by Psygnosis, both generally and also specifically Shadow Of The Beast, but doesn't take anything without asking, and gives back twice as much in return.

Judge Drok (Anarchy)



Roots : Cougar

This logo created by Cougar in 1994 for the Sanity's Roots demo seems to be organic; the reflections and the mixture of bland colours manage to create a particular atmosphere. I compare this logo to the 5 elements, in order of appearance: R earth, O metal, O wood, T water and S fire. We wonder what went through Cougar's.

Christophe (Editions64K)

Tristar : Terminator

Terminator was a pioneer. When I first saw this logo, there was nothing else like it out there. Very clean, well-chosen colours and a great 3D effect. So inspiring. He was so far ahead. Too bad that his time in the scene was so short. I would have loved to have seen a lot more art from him.

J.O.E aka Peter Baustaedter (Scoopex & TRSI)



1991, Darkman, a forgettable Ocean game, sporting a cracktro of legendary proportions. Angel Dawn/Jump did a new logo for Fairlight, and it ended up getting used frequently from 1991-1996, because it was that awesome. Thirty-two colours, low res, anti-aliasing skills of a God, every part of that Fairlight logo was and is perfection, mainly used on Amiga, but featured on PC, SNES, and Mega Drive. Show this logo to anyone who had an Amiga, and every

one of them would nod appreciatively at its perfection. Nothing comes close.

Galahad

Mental Hangover : Reward

I remember when Mental Hangover came out, it was such a game-changer. It signified the end of the mega demo and the move to seamless productions. The logo is iconic, and really set the tone for what was to come - brings back great memories for me whenever I see it!

Spook aka Paul Robinson (Digital)





Melon : Seen

This logo is legendary. It embodies for me THE major turning point of the demoscene. In 1991 a new kind of crew was born: MELON DEZIGN. For the first time a demo is not only nice or technical, but it becomes: "Design". Founder of the group, the artist SEEN had the original idea not to try to hide the pixels as usual (anti-aliasing) but to magnify them

exaggeratedly, reminiscent of the first 8-bit computers, and to use only two colours of the 32 available. This minimalist logo with a strong visual impact, which has been copied many times, was a revolution in the world of demoscene.

Stranger (Hemoroids^Rebels^DLG Crew)

Kefrens : Blizzart from Desert Dream, 1993

Kefrens – Desert Dream. Guardian Dragon 2. D.A.N.E. Some of my fave demos of all time. Most memorable for me for the music of Laxity and SLL, and the serpentine creature, stonework, and glass-like font of the Desert Dream logo resonates strongly for me with that demo and its amazing sequence of effects and music.

K8-BIT (Kate Lorimer)



Nah-Colour : Lazur

Back in 1995, this Amiga AGA full-screen logo was quite advanced. The battlefield, clouds, and especially the transparent 'NAH' letters are what make this logo unique. The artist Lazur at his best. It stands the test of time pretty well even by today's standards, in my humble opinion.

Magic (Nah-Kolor)

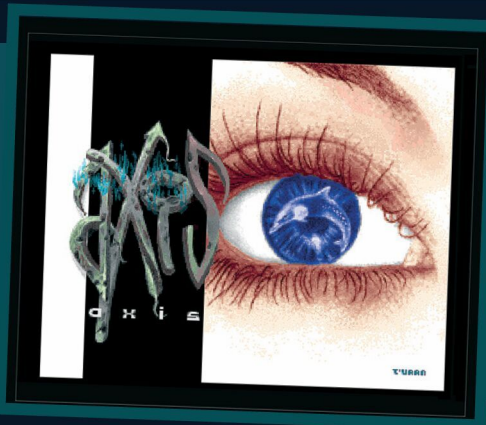


Sanity Logo : Cougar of Sanity, 'myself'

I started sketching the first letters on paper and then switched straight to the Amiga once I was sure of the idea. It's kind of a little "fantasy story". A logo that reflects some kind of image. Imagine you have a landscape, with magic trees surrounding a castle in the middle and a volcano in the background. The scenery comes alive and is framed by the dragon and the demon.

Cougar of Sanity





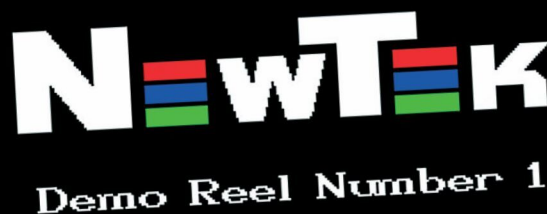
Axix : T'uaan, from Big Time Sensuality Demo

An early AGA demo that blew me away with its gorgeous colourful imagery, effects, and, once again, a memorable soundtrack that is very much the crux of my Amiga demo nostalgia. A complex logo used with colour block framing and that beautiful eye reflecting a dolphin leap – pure fantasy, but stylish and yet somehow sinister with the artistic lettering and Alien-esque font below like a subtitle for the hard-of-art-appreciating.

K8-BIT (Kate Lorimer)

NewTek Logo : Demo Reel 1

The NewTek logo sends chills down my spine to this day. I will always remember my first time seeing “Demo Reel 1”. Never before did a home computer have photo-realistic images like the ones created here with DigiView in glorious OCS HAM mode. This demo sparked my interest in digital images and inspired me to become the professional photographer and cinematographer that I am today.



Amiga Bill



Vision Logo : Hein Design

I like the Netherlanders, they've always had a great sense of demo style, and this logo is a great example of that. Hein excels at code, music, and graphics. This logo was featured in the demo Can't Be (1991), coded by his late brother, TSM (The Scientific Man). Every pixel is applied with precision and beautifully accented with the colour spheres. Truly exquisite!

Motion of Artstate

TRSI Logo : J.O.E.

I chose the TRSI logo by J.O.E because it was so visually striking at the time. It's stuck in my mind since and was an obvious choice, although it was never used in a big demo. You can almost feel the heat of the searing hot metal, with layers of metal peeling away, and such a great use of the Amiga palette. It clearly had an effect on other sceners because the effect was copied many times.

Michael Troughton (Kreator/Anarchy)

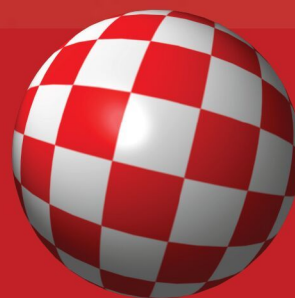


Rocket Ranger

Publisher: Cinemaware

Developer: Cinemaware

Year of Release: 1988



The time: May 1940. The location: Planet Earth. The news: The Nazis have won World War II. Hang on, what? That's not how it's supposed to go! Fortunately, a group of scientific freedom fighters some 100 years from now have developed technology that can put right this dreadful wrong. Sitting at your desk, you reel in astonishment as a number of incredible items are beamed to you from the future; not least of which is a rocket pack with which you can travel the world at great speed! You also have a radium pistol with which to take on the Nazis, although there are times when a good old-fashioned fistfight will do...

Well, what are you waiting for? Gather your tools and your thoughts, get into the skies and defeat the Nazi scourge, Rocket Ranger!

Paul Morrison: Cinemaware came to prominence with their epic medieval title, Defender of the Crown, but for me, Rocket Ranger is where they got everything absolutely right. The presentation is incredible: from the cinematic cutscenes to the authentic incidental music to the brilliance of every mini-game, Rocket Ranger is a thrilling radio serial brought to brilliant interactive life. The mini-games are all entertaining, but they're hung around an intriguing core game, where espionage and strategy are to the fore. In this context, all the mini-games make perfect sense, and the fact you're never quite sure which one you'll get makes this even more fun. It's a real challenge, too... I doubt if many completed this on their first attempt. Treat yourself to a double feature one weekend, play this and watch The Rocketeer movie. Trust me, you'll have a great time.







TEST

Specs: Amiga with 512Kb minimum.



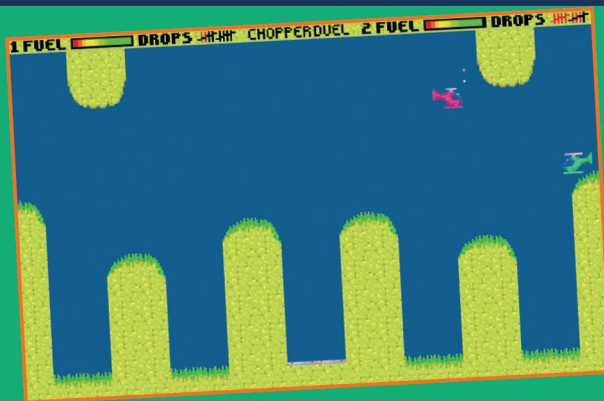
CHOPPER DUEL

Izero79 - 2023
(Free/Donation)

Some of my fondest memories of the Amiga are playing two-player versus games with my mate Adam. In particular, the ones that tended to come with magazine cover disks. You know the ones: *Master Blaster*, *Gravity Force*, *Trick or Treat*, and *Cow Wars*, they

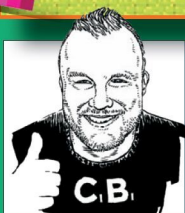
were all great fun. So, when I saw news of a new two-player game in the same style as the aforementioned titles, I was eager to check it out.

Chopper Duel is a single-screen,



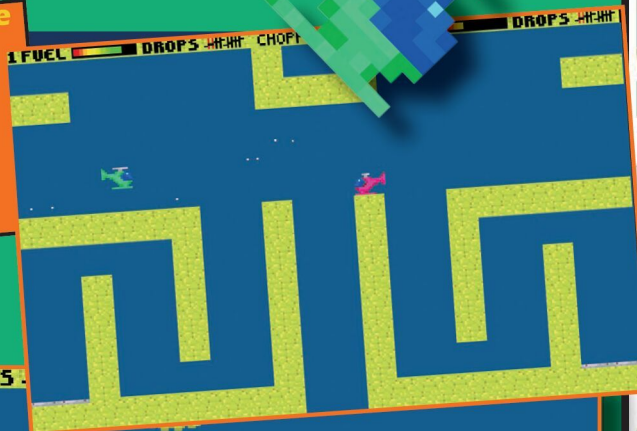
fast-paced, and frantic two-player shooter that sees you take to the skies in your own little helicopter in an attempt to shoot down your opponent. The game was originally released for PC-DOS back in 1993 by Addict and has been converted by Izero79 for the Amiga.

Starting the game, you get to select your control options, either joystick or keyboard, as well as which level you'd like to play. There are fifty to choose from, each with their own unique layouts and varying levels of difficulty. You have to score ten points, or drops, to win. Should you crash, a point is awarded to your opponent. You have to manage your helicopter's fuel, which runs down fast but can be replenished by touching down on a flashing landing pad. So, get your favourite joystick at the ready and prepare for battle!



It's true what they say, the simple games tend to be the best, and the same can be said of Chopper Duel. The first few levels keep things nice and easy with minimal scenery to crash into, allowing you to get to grips with the floaty helicopter mechanics. With fifty levels to play through, you won't get bored anytime soon, although some of the later screens are quite unforgiving, and this is where precision piloting skills are required. The graphics are colourful and nicely drawn, and the music is really well composed, with a fast-paced techno beat which I really like. Sadly, there are no sound effects which, if implemented, would add another dimension to the game. Even just some basic gunshot and explosion sounds would be a welcome addition. In terms of fast-paced two-player action, it's no Gravity Force, but overall, Chopper Duel is a fun and frantic experience.

Get the game here



Are you looking for a game that epitomises the 90s? Bold colours? Check. Quirky, sketched-

out sprites? Check. Obligatory 90s rave music as an homage to the best PD and cracking groups? Check. Chopper Duel is literally what it says in the title, nothing more, nothing less. And for a fast one-on-one heli-bash, you aren't going to find one better. Plenty of maps enable your wanton destruction needs, but little more to keep you playing beyond a quick five minutes. It does, however, help me relive my 90s youth, so I'm keeping that soundtrack running, buying some glowsticks on Amazon and inviting the guys around!

PRESENTATION 80%

Simple title screen, with easy to navigate options. Good, thought-out level design.

GRAPHICS 81%

Decent 32-colour graphics, with well-drawn helicopter sprites and background maps.

SOUND 88%

The top title track and excellent in-game techno tune take you back to the 1990s.

HOOKABILITY 83%

Quick to pick up and master, you will have a good giggle.

LASTABILITY 83%

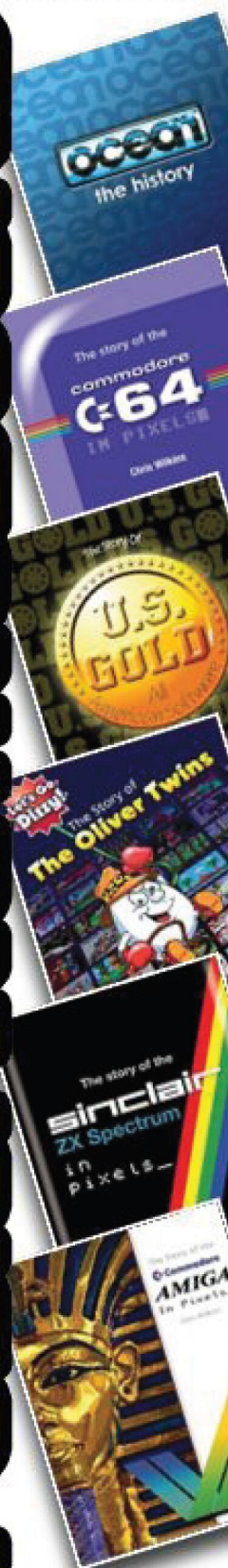
Fifty levels seems massive, but the game needed power-ups and more background variety to make it a must-play.

OVERALL 81%

A fun two-player versus game that captures the old Amiga spirit, try it out chop-chop!

fusionretrobooks.com

FUSIONRETROBOOKS



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CARTHAGE

MEMOIRS



AMIGA musician Tim Wright shares his memoirs on *Carthage*, which was released under the Psygnosis label in 1990.

Carthage is a stand-out game, from a musical perspective, for me because it was one of the first games where I tried to recreate the vibe of an orchestral or, at least, a cinematic score within a fairly humble memory footprint. To be fair, it was actually one of the first games I worked on, too - one of eight that would either be developed or released in 1990. It was certainly a prolific year for me!

The *Carthage* title theme was around 114Kb, the end-game theme a teeny bit less than that. The victory and game-over scores were around the 60kb mark. Finally, and indeed the smallest memory-wise, was the

fractal-map tune, coming in at around 26Kb. This is kind of perverse really, because you do tend to spend a lot of time on the map, but there's not much room for audio with the code on that screen.

The plan was that the five tunes would mostly share musical instrument samples. This was so that said samples could always reside in RAM. I'm not sure if that's how it ended up being coded, we'd have to quiz David Worrall about that. He doesn't seem to give interviews very often, however, and I've not been in touch for many, many years. Interestingly, I see David doesn't list *Carthage* on his LinkedIn page, so maybe he wasn't so proud of it!

Both David and I are credited for "sound" in the game. What that breaks down to is me creating the music samples, composing the music, and providing some of the in-game sound effects. If memory serves, David threw in some of his own sound effects too, and possibly edited them down to a smaller size.

When composing the music, I thought I could cleverly have orchestral percussion sounds, and then augment this with short looping vocal "oooh" samples. This would give the impression of an orchestral or filmic arrangement, but actually be quite frugal memory-wise. I think I got away with it too, as I've been complimented on how good it sounds, given the memory constraints. There was the common 'playing samples as slow speeds' trick, to make good use of the available sounds, of course. In fact, there were many instrument samples - maybe 10 in total, and most songs didn't use them all. You can find the Protracker MOD files on the interwebs and go dig - there's a bell, brass, choir loop, a couple of vocal loops, a major and minor organ chord loop, string loop, massive gong, and timpani.

The game never really made waves, to be honest, which is why I'm guessing many of you won't even have heard of

it. If you have, well done! That said, it didn't do so badly, review-wise. Andy Hutchinson in AMIGA Format gave it 82% in Issue 19. He makes no mention of the music nor the sound effects, but as I later learned, many games journalists back in the day would review games with zero sound so as to not disturb their fellow workers. Hard to believe, but I've heard that from more than one person who worked on magazines back in the day. The ZZAP! team, back in issue 70, were quite impressed by the graphics and music, but they didn't really think it had much lastability. So the 80%+ scores for artistic content were dragged down to an overall score of 66%. But, I'll happily take the 81% for sound, even if in the review

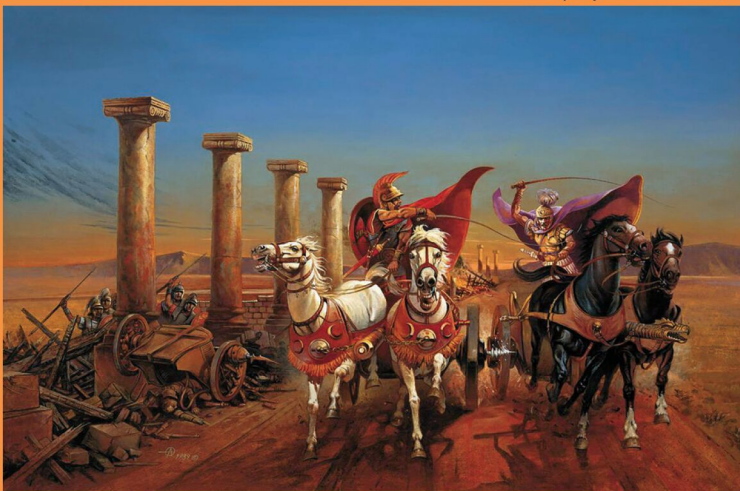
around, finding his way. If you'd like to read more reviews, you can find them on [abime.net](https://amr.abime.net/review_2084). Largely they were very kind to me, for which I am quite grateful, because this helped to cement my position as a provider for Psygnosis for many more games (https://amr.abime.net/review_2084).

At the end of the day, *Carthage* was actually quite an engaging battle strategy simulator, with arcade sections on top to add variety. The accomplished in-game art was created by people who are now considered master craftsmen in the games and film industry. Jim Bowers (*Aquaventura*,



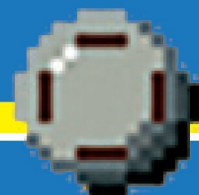
Golden Compass, *Skyfall* and *Casino Royale*), Neil Thompson (*Revenge of the Mutant Camels*, *Red Zone*, *Nitro*, *Aquaventura* and went on to be Art Director at SCEE, Bizarre Creations, BioWare and Inflexion).

I remember being really impressed that they got Chris Achilleos, who was a personal favourite of mine because his artwork was so amazing, to provide the box artwork. Also, I must confess that, as a horny teenager, I had on my wall a calendar called "Sirens" that featured a collection of some of his best female power figures. I was in awe of Chris' fictional ladies - so stunningly beautiful and so well painted. That's one thing about Psygnosis, they seldom skimped on the box artwork, leaning heavily on Roger Dean for many of their games. I guess my final remarks are that I've never actually reworked or upscaled the music from *Carthage*, but if I were thinking of which games I'd like to create more CD quality score of, I think the melodies from this game would hold up quite well as full scores.



they just called it "pretty good", hehe! So, truth be told, not such a bad reception for a musician who was still scrabbling

Obliterator, *Stryx*, *Armour-Geddon*, *WipEout* and more recently visual effects & matte painting for films such as *The*



XEVIOUS

JOTD — 2023 / £ free to download

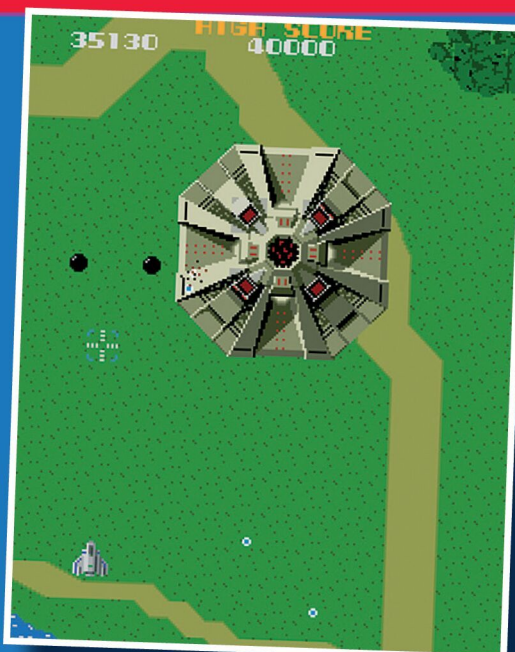
Taking to the skies and bombing anything remotely silver is *Xevious 1200*, the conversion of the classic arcade shoot 'em up from Namco. Proving the best way to dispatch an enemy craft is to hammer it with more metal than the average Metallica album, because why fix a tactic that isn't broke, right?

This double conversion of *Xevious* and (the hard-to-distinguish) *Super Xevious* has been delivered to us by JOTD, who has done a great job of bringing these arcade games to the Amiga without sacrificing any of their quality or charm. The games require an Amiga 1200 with 2MB of RAM; however, that is the least of your worries because, let's face it, these games are hard as nails despite the age of the originals, and you will need all the help



you can get if you aim to survive the onslaught.

The graphics here are impressive, with colourful, vibrant sprites, and smooth scrolling detailed environmental backdrops that pay homage to the original with the same level of care and attention. It's clear that the developers put a lot of effort into making the game look as accurate as possible - give them a round of applause, folks! Likewise, the music composed by Andrzej Dobrowolski (aka no9), who created an Amiga version of the original arcade soundtrack, is catchy and fits the mood of the game well. With that mood being "I'm going to die a lot". So enjoy those opening tunes; you may be hearing them a lot! As for the gameplay, well, it's pretty standard shoot 'em up fare. You fly your spaceship through various levels, using your quick reflexes to shoot down enemy spacecraft and ground targets as you go, all the



while trying to push beyond your last high score. The game can be played with a joystick or a keyboard, with the former recommended for better accuracy and comfort, while the keyboard is recommended for better release of frustration and rage!

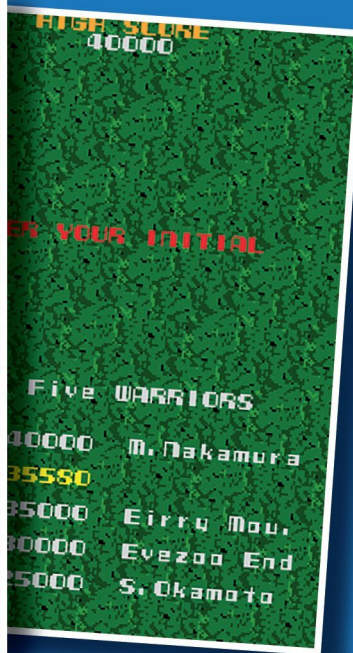
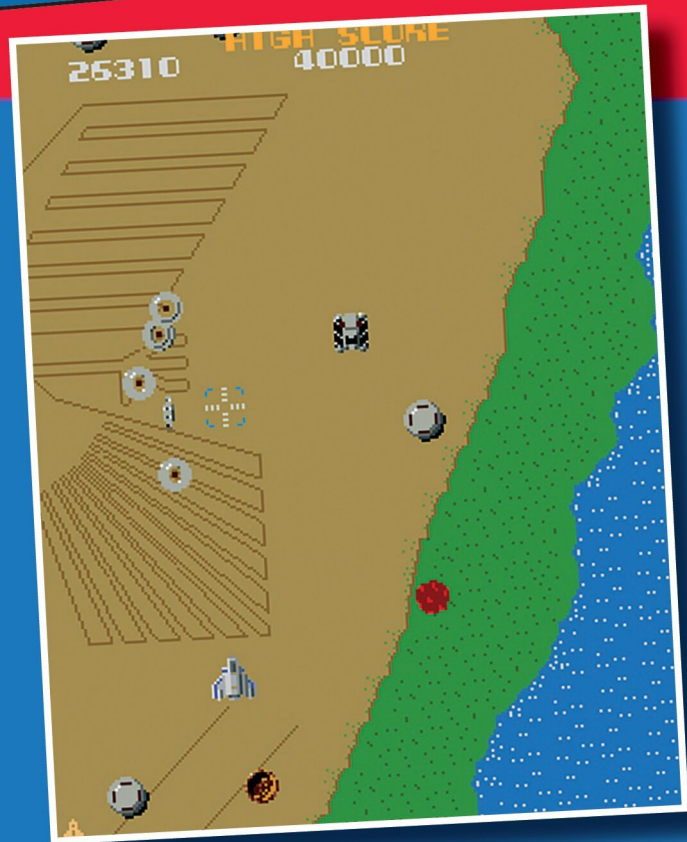
Joking aside, however, the game is fun and addictive and offers a lot of replay value for fans of retro shooters. *Xevious 1200* is one of the more polished conversions to be ported in a long while and a must-have for any Amiga 1200 owner who loves arcade games or hates feeling relaxed.

I love a good shoot 'em up, and have played many over the years, so Xevious 1200 brings back fond memories of summer holidays, endlessly trying to scrape a few more seconds of game time per credit in a bullet-filled screen of luscious green fields and military might, in a brightly lit arcade. Games may have progressed beyond the originality this behemoth used to provide, but its charm and the urge to just have 'one more go' remains intact, and I love the team for giving us that!

Get the game here



I used to love Xevious. It was one of the loudest games in the arcade, and you could hear it from miles away. It really is a gaming icon. Funnily enough, though, it never received a decent home computer port. That's now been rectified, because this Amiga version is nigh on arcade perfect. It plays just as you'd want, and I can get exactly as far at this as I can in the arcade version. In fact, the only flaw I can find is that the sound effects seem a little quieter than the original game. If you're a fan of this legendary shmup, or want to see how the genre began, go and grab this excellent package now.



PRESENTATION 82%

A homage to the 1980s arcade, clean and polished with an excellent disk menu.

GRAPHICS 79%

A pixel perfect conversion without modern thrills.

SOUND 77%

Hurt me plenty soundtrack, check - that tune is ANNOYING.

HOOKABILITY 88%

Classic fast-action gameplay that is tough but playable.

LASTABILITY 87%

With an array of levels across two games, it'll take months to master.

OVERALL 86%

A bullet-heavy beauty of a conversion that retains all of the charm and shows no remorse.

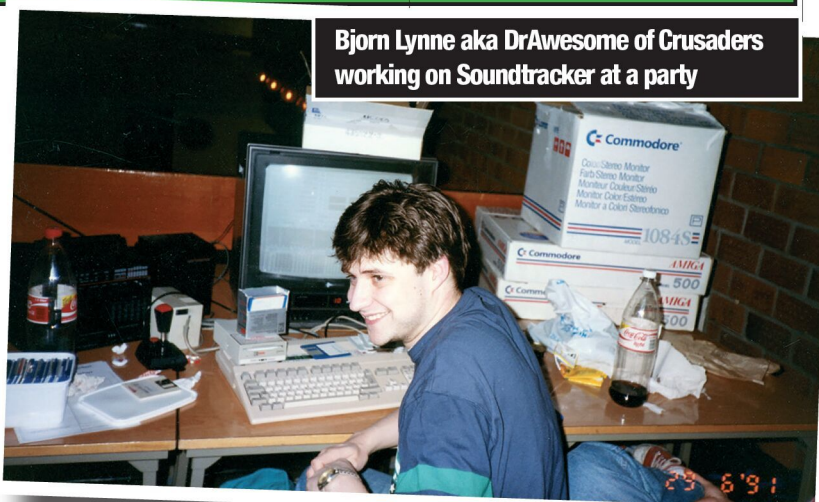
AMIGA PARTY CULTURE

By Judge DrokK

Welcome to 'Amiga Party Culture', the place where I take a trip back in time and pick apart the soul of the demoscene as its members embarked on a pilgrimage to the ultimate scene meeting place in all of the world (but usually in Europe). I'm Judge DrokK, founding member of Anarchy and a party organizer myself, and in this episode we look at the positive effects of the competition you faced at such an event as (what the impressionable youth of today would call) a content creator.

It's never been more true to say that the demoscene scene changed lives. Creative skills and opportunities were unlocked, which set in place a life map for many. The outreaching influence can be felt today in everything from video games to film and music production.

Would the Playstation's *Destruction Derby* still have been coded by the



Bjorn Lynne aka DrAwesome of Crusaders working on Soundtracker at a party

Troughton brothers (Anarchy and Genesis Project team members), if their demoscene adventure had been less triumphant?

Success or failure is magnified at a demo-party event and, like a ZZAP! review score,

the results are remembered for as long as we live - and possibly beyond. Historians will no doubt revisit and preserve the facts as they eventually become legend. Who better to talk to on this subject than those with personal history and competitive experience in all forms of the scene? Here we might perhaps discover that the biggest competition is actually against yourself.

The info desk at 'The Party 1991' in DK



Mr Perfect of the SILENTS

I believe the competitive environment was an amazing learning experience, with

records constantly being broken. The important lesson learned was that when something was believed to be impossible, one should never give up. Instead, think a bit harder and start with the question "If it were to be possible, what would be the required steps?". This is the main reason why so many of the old demos sceners have later made very successful businesses. Whenever they hear someone say "it can't be done", they ignore it and find a solution for the "impossible" problem.
Mr Perfect of Silents 1988-1990 -
Coder, graphics artist



In general, competition is needed for us to stretch and reach beyond our initial expectations.

There is a

saying that you can do twice what you think and four times more than your Mom thinks. Though only competition and desperation can bring that forward. Competition is at the heart of progress. The learnings from the scene have been vital for several of us. We have three computer science professors in the group Fairlight (one a psychology professor, I can add), and two rather big companies are spin-offs from us. One of the leading producers of firewalls had one of our guys at the core (Clavister), and the demo section produced the tool you see creating the visual backdrops when the world's leading artists are performing on stage (Notch). The management experiences from running the group have also been instrumental in our future professional careers. This is not even mentioning the use of the network of peers and fans and all the doors that opened for us.

Bacchus of Fairlight - world-leading cracker and Fairlight organiser



I think it was all very symbiotic. The demoscene traditionally was always pushing the hardware to new levels, and from new groundbreaking demos came new ways to make games. New games meant new hackers and crackers

who, in turn, wanted to flex their programming skills making demos. Me, personally, I was always amazed with the quality of the instrument samples people created on Amiga. I, as a professional composer, had no professional audio gear to speak of, so half of my time was spent ripping the samples out of demos so I could use them in games - the symbiotic relationship!

Barry Leitch - Videogame soundtrack composer.

Pondering deadlines on the TSB desk.



Absolutely, I know graphicicians who are working with art direction and marketing today, as well as coders working with programming musicians who have made

careers as well. I have personally enjoyed engaging inter-culturally and developing international contacts during the scene years, assets that have been used later during my career.

Trix of Anarchy - Stolen Data editor, co-organiser of The Party & The Party II



This is the wonderful thing, I may not have the career that I have if it wasn't for the demos scene. I got an

Amiga at Christmas

1989 and was instantly hooked on Soundtracker. At the Share and Enjoy Party in 1990 (Croydon, UK), I met folks who said I should write music for games. I hadn't thought about it; that was a real job, I was 17. Nevertheless, I spent the rest of the summer ringing up companies who advertised in ZZAP! 64 and asking who does the music for their games. I got the standard response, 'send something, and we'll put it on file'. I went to a trade show in September 1990 and met a few of the folks I'd spoken to. In October 1990, one rang me up. It was The Sales Curve, they wanted to hear some of my tracks. I went in, as nervous as F__. I sat in the corner of the room and played a selection. They laughed and joked until I played a track called 'Decimation', a tune I'd written for a demo that was previously planned to be released by my team, Ecstasy, at the aforementioned Share and Enjoy party. The producer took me aside and asked if they could buy it for the title music of their next game. That game was SWIV. Andrew Barbabas (Nightshade), composer with videogame, TV and film credits



I don't think that competing had any effect in my moving to commercial work, simply because writing music and competing in an event (I think I only competed in one) were no different from each other. I was always just writing

whatever music came out. It didn't matter, and I put no thought (aside from the Tetris demo) into what I was writing. I simply wrote for the sheer enjoyment of it, posted it to my team in Copenhagen, and if they wanted to use it, then they would, or would not. I wouldn't have known either way, anyway.

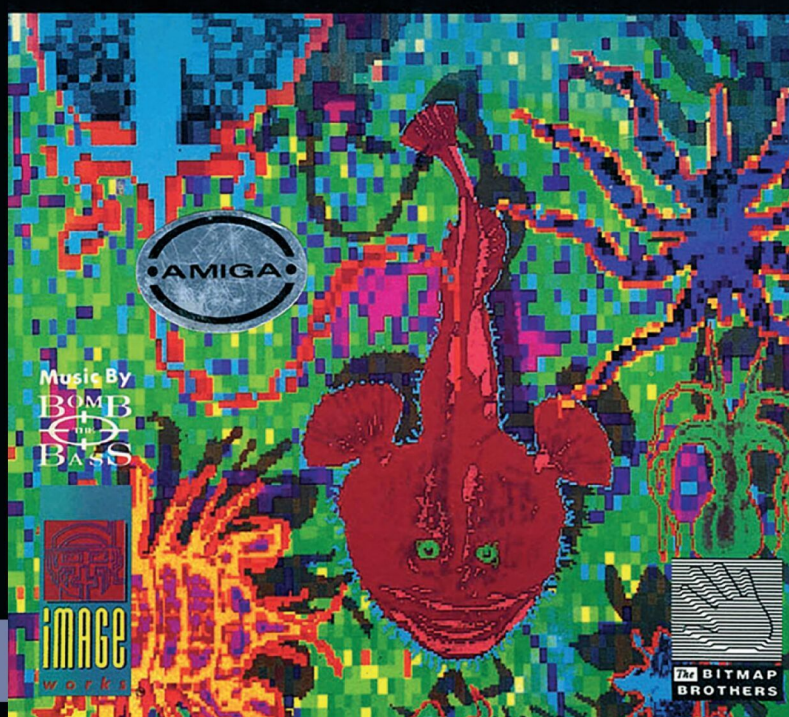
Mark Knight (TDK/Madfiddler), Melon Dezin, musician.

Knackosoft of TRSI wearing homemade shirt at a party.

XENON

2

M E G A B L A S T

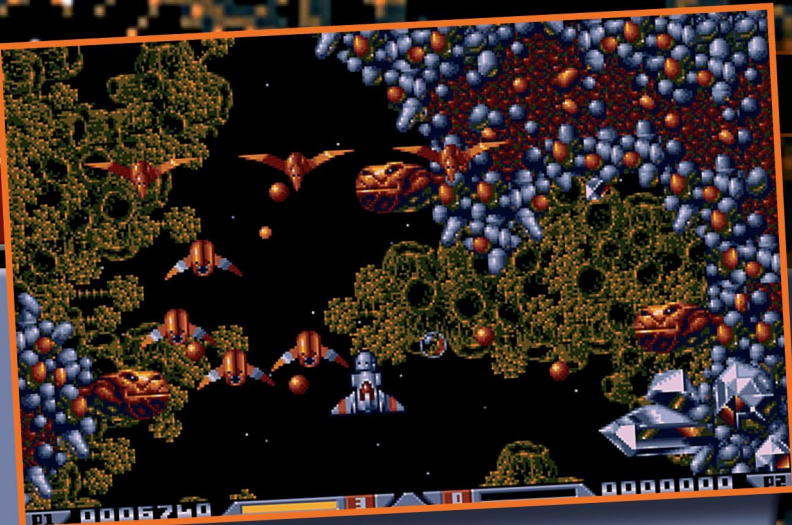


Welcome to the next instalment of the ZZAP! Amiga Files, where we focus on one game, telling its story as revealed throughout the pages of the world's most fabulous Commodore magazine. From reviews to marketing, tips, and more, Graeme Mason delves into the files to discover everything we said about a particular game.

After last issue's peek back at Kick Off 2, this month he looks at another sequel, the fantastic Xenon 2: Megablast.

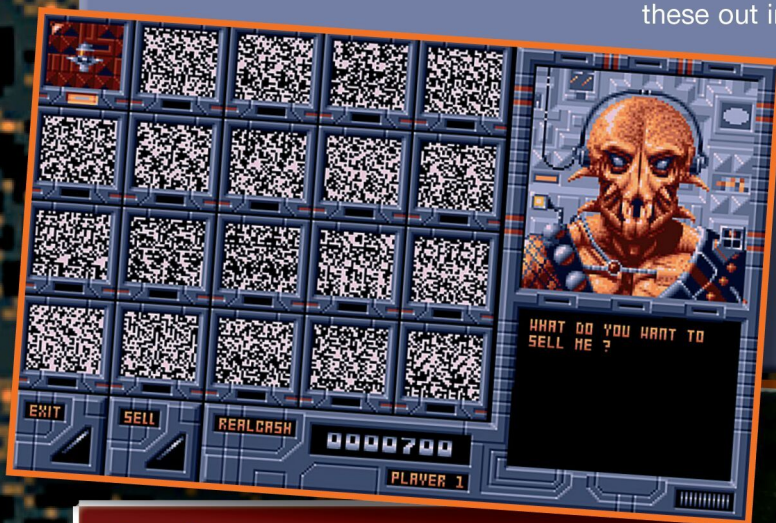
The Game

"The Xenites are back and have thrown time itself into turmoil!" screams the back cover to *Xenon 2*. "Only you can save the day – not to mention the universe!" The devious aliens have planted five time bombs throughout history, and the player journeys through these vertically-scrolling time zones inside their Megablaster battlecraft, obliterating



flying and fixed aliens. The Megablaster has a shield that can absorb bullets and collisions, but the next hit destroys the craft once it's exhausted. At the end of each level, a special guardian protects the time bomb. Only by taking

these out in a specific way can you save time and the universe. It's a monumental task that lies in front of you, but fear not: to help you in your cause, the Megablaster can pick up tokens from destroyed enemies. At specific points, a shop appears, manned by an abrupt creature known as 'Crispin'. Use the tokens to buy upgrades and health boosts – you'll need them!



Preview

Following the success of the Bitmap Brothers' first game, *Xenon*, a sequel appeared inevitable. But the secretive developer managed to keep word of its follow-up quiet until it, at last, slipped out in the spring of 1989. Our source was the BBC2 games programme, *Signals*, which had previewed a 'secret project' from the team. Two months later, all was revealed: "*Xenon II – Megablast* is reputed to be 50% bigger than the original, with three-layer parallax scrolling and a supposedly fab Bomb The Bass remixed soundtrack... sounds like a good 'un," we chimed. Naturally, everyone was anticipating the incoming review...



XENON II – THE SECRET'S OUT!

Who saw the BBC2 programme *Signals* a month or two back? You know, the one about computer games? Did you see the 'secret project' previewed by the Bitmap Brothers? Well, it's a secret no longer! It's the sequel to the absolutely brilliant Amiga (and so-so C64) title, *Xenon*!

Xenon II – Megablast is reputed to be some 50% bigger than the original, with three layer parallax scrolling and a supposedly fab Bomb The Bass remixed soundtrack. Amiga first, 64 later, sounds like a good 'un.

But it's not all reshapes down at ImageWorks, they do actually rattle out the odd original title, you know. One of them is called *Palladin, Lord of the Dancing Braves*, and besides being a particularly long name, it's all about wizards and knights and stuff like that (even though it sounds like a cowboys and indians type thing). That one will receive its first showing on the Amiga (as yet no 64 version is planned) and you'll be able to get hold of it when the weather is a bit hotter.

The Review

Finally, in October of 1989 and issue 54, the ZZAP! reviewers got their sweaty palms on the Bitmap Brothers' sequel. But would the admittedly superb presentation overshadow the gameplay? "Well, to begin with, it's not that much more than a standard vertically-scrolling shoot-'em-up," cautioned Stuart Wynne. "But as you get further into the game, the ability to scroll the screen back, dive down, and the unbelievable range of wonderful weapons provides the vital difference." Stu's fellow reviewers, especially Robin Hogg, were much less guarded. "Fantastic, superb, brilliant, bloody marvellous – I could go on and on calling out superlatives about *Xenon 2*." Steady on there, Robin! The hype was real, however, and *Xenon 2* was a palpable hit with the ZZAP! reviewers. "Quite simply the definitive Amiga shoot-'em-up," concluded Stu. How would the effusive praise be reflected in the scores?



The Verdict

PRESENTATION 84%

Great Intro and two-player option.

GRAPHICS 98%

Any of the five levels would be spectacular on their own, together they're unbelievable.

SOUND 94%

Good ingame tune and attractive sound FX.

HOOKABILITY 98%

Starts off hard but you soon learn the patterns necessary to complete level one. Graphics, weapons and sheer playability keep you glued to the joystick.

LASTABILITY 95%

Even when your ship's trebled in width with weapons it's tough. Packed with value-for-money in short.

OVERALL
97%

The Bitmap Bros aren't going to lose any street cred with this one.

Despite our reviewers' admiration for *Xenon 2*'s Presentation, it strangely scored 'just' 84% in that category. Everything else, however, was firmly in the nineties, with the Bomb The Bass/David Whittaker soundtrack gaining 94% and Lastability an incredible 95%. Best of all were the scores for Graphics and Hookability – an astonishing 98% apiece! An overall score of 97% amply reflected one of the finest shooting games ever on the Commodore Amiga. "The Bitmap Bros aren't going to lose any street cred with this one," we wisely concluded.



(Mega) Blasting into the Charts

Space restrictions meant the ZZAP! charts were absent until issue 58, a full five months after *Xenon 2* blasted our reviewers. While the Bitmap Brothers shooter failed to make the Amiga top ten, its cracking tune sailed into the Amiga music chart at number five, the Bomb The Bass remixed soundtrack bobbing around the first and second position until the final music chart inside issue 70. As for the game itself, *Xenon 2* never rose above number two in the top ten Amiga chart, yet remained a solid contender despite slipping out totally in issue 65 (it was back at number two the following month) until the end of the reader-voted charts in issue 70.

TOP 10 AMIGA GAMES

1. Operation Thunderbolt (Ocean)
2. Batman: The Movie (Ocean)
3. F-29 Retaliator (Ocean)
4. Kick Off (Anco)
5. Strider (Capcom/US Gold)
6. Sim City (Infogrames)
7. Blood Money (Psygnosis)
8. North And South (Infogrames)
9. Xenon 2 (Mirrorsoft)
10. Atron 5000 (Players)



Xenon 2 – Neverblast on the C64

The preview of *Xenon 2* from issue 50 noted that ‘as yet, no C64 version is planned.’. When the review rolled in four issues later, we changed this to ‘A C64 version’s possible, but not definitely decided yet.’ It all sounded a bit vague, so it was perhaps unsurprising the Commodore 64 port of *Xenon 2* never came. But years later, Frank Gasking of the excellent website *Games That Weren’t 64* revealed that early discussions had taken place between the Bitmap Brothers and developer Robert Whittaker. Unfortunately, it never came to anything, and given the reception to the first *Xenon* on the C64, and the advanced technology of *Xenon 2*, it’s doubtful anyone would have been able to do the game justice on the 8-bit computer.

64

A C64 version's possible, but not definitely decided yet.

update

Tips – never – but a Scorelord in Gremlin Ged

2,912 Phil King, ZZAP! Towers
390 David Parkinson, Hoxbury, W Yorks

EDUX (Thalamus)
3 Craig Archer, Victoria, Australia
3 Steve Pratt, Leighton Buzzard, Beds
3 Martin Hulsent, Nunspeet, Holland

REGADE 3 (Imagine)
20 Philip Stevenson, Weeping Cross, Staffs

ROGRADE (Thalamus)
500 Rob H, ZZAP! Towers
50 Phil King, ZZAP! Towers

K DANGEROUS (Firebird)
500 (Completed) Casey Gallacher, Reading

SOCCO (Ocean) (Amiga)
350 (Completed) David Pocock, South
350
310 (Completed) Bret 'Ice' Crossley, Rothwell,
35
280 (Completed) Roblocop H, ZZAP! Towers

350 (Completed) Jamie Aldron, Manselton,
350 (Completed) Marcus Taylor, Poole, Dorset

YPE (Electric Dreams) (Amiga)
300 (Completed) Lee Elenshaw, Blackpool
700 Marcus Taylor, Poole, Dorset
400 (Completed) Rob H, ZZAP! Towers

AMANDER (Imagine)
695 Simon 'Ace' Poole, Dromore, Co Down
100 Darren Burke, Romford, Essex
005 Gaspart Amaud, Belgium

MURAL WARRIOR (Firebird)
5 Bret 'Cool' Crossley, Rothwell, Leeds
5 Karl Green, Asklam, Cleveland
7 Wayne Fowler, Basildon, Essex

Release (Completed) Brian, London

TETRIS (Mirrorsoft)
1,211,029 J Tiltson, Halifax, W Yorks
92,538 Shane McDroy, Newry, N Ireland
78,986 Stuart Scattergood, Bessde, Chwyd

THING BOUNCES BACK (Gremlin Graphics)
8,875,496 Tim Smith, Nr. Nantwich, Cheshire
4,992,013 William Callaghan, Tipton, West
Midlands
3,949,835 Casey Gallacher, Calcot, Reading

TURBO OUT RUN (US Gold)
16,310,000 Rob 'Road' Hogg, ZZAP! Towers

THE UNTOUCHABLES (Ocean)
76,125 Stuart Wynne, ZZAP! Towers

XENON II (Imageworks) (Amiga)
512,160 (Completed) Ged Keaveney, Shelley, W
Yorks
286,500 (Completed) R Pembridge, Upton,
Merseyside
170,470 Daniel Besser, Blitchley, Bucks

ZENJI (Firebird)
98,485 Stephen Lunn, Terrington St John, Cambs.
84,253 Lisa O'Halloran, Victoria, Australia
66,250 Mark Crosswhite, Stockport, Cheshire

ZYNAPS (Hewson)
1,137,000 Aziz Twainblay, Bramhall, Cheshire
1,093,200 Michael Collins, Castle Rea, Co
Roscommon
1,071,525 Mark Clements, Kettering, Northants

**MOST EMBARRASSING KICK OFF THRASHING
OF THE MONTH**
TGM equalled the ZZAP! record with Dom beating
co-TGMer Richard Monteiro (ex-Future Magazines
champ!) 12-1
(Richard is yet to win a match; apart from against a
drunk Rob H which doesn't count)

As was sadly familiar, tips for Amiga games were proving elusive, despite the pleas of resident tipster Robin Hogg. *Xenon 2* did, however, become popular with high-score junkies, and Ged Keaveney of West Yorkshire submitted an impressive total of 512,160 in issue 58 of February 1990. Two months earlier, Ged had started work as a programmer at Gremlin in what would become an impressive career in the games industry. We're guessing his gaming skills didn't come into question during his interview.

Readers Awards

The 1989 Readers' Awards arrived the following summer, and we predicted *Xenon 2* to appear strongly in the Amiga sections. Along with *Sim City* and *Stunt Car Racer*, the Bitmap Brothers' shooter tied in second place for Best Game Of The Year, all three ceding to the winner, Kick Off. But success was not to be denied for *Xenon 2* as it beat out Ocean's *Operation Thunderbolt* and Psygnosis's lovely *Shadow Of The Beast* in the Best Graphics category. The Bitmap boys themselves squeezed past the likes of Geoff Crammond and Bullfrog to secure the Best Programmer/Programming Team award, while its catchy tune from Bomb The Bass eviscerated the opposition in the Best Sound category. The success was not surprising: Stu had already cited *Xenon 2* as one of his favourite Amiga games of all time when we polled the ZZAP! reviewers in issue 57.

Final Thoughts

Despite decent success with *Xenon* and *Speedball*, *Xenon 2* is the game that put the Bitmap Brothers firmly on the map, cementing its reputation as a developer of high-class computer games. While hardly original, Megablast's wonderful graphics and sound contribute perfectly to its addictive gameplay, making it a well-deserved entry in the pantheon of all-time Commodore Amiga classics.

BEST SOUND

SCORELORD: 'To present this award we wanted someone with a bit of musical flair, but we had to settle instead for ZZAP! Art Director and amateur (I emphasise this word) musician, Markie Kendrick . . .'

MARKIE: 'Whew, what a gig! This is a bigger crowd than a Fused audience (ie more than half a dozen – Scorelord). I'm just so happy to accept this award . . . what d'you mean it's not for me? Oh well, you can't win 'em all (you can't win any – Scorelord). Anyway, like, know what I mean marras, third zit . . . er, I mean spot, goes to *The Untouchables* (never heard of 'em, have they played in Ludlow?). Second boil goes to *Myth*, but in first pus-pourer with 39% it's *Turbo Out Run* for US Gold by Maniacs Of Noise (are they a thrash metal group?).'

DANIELLE: 'Well, what can I say . . . have I mentioned the ferret?'

MARKIE: 'Yo ladz, it's time for the top three Amiga sounds. In joint third place are *Blood Money* and *Shadow Of The Beast*, both from Psygnosis. At number two is *Batman: The Movie*, but this year's number one is Mirrorsoft's *Xenon 2* with that happenin' title tune by Bomb The Bass.'



Rick Dangerous Enhanced

Z-Team - 2023 (Free to download)

Get the game here



Gasp! At the daring exploits of Rick Dangerous! Swoon! At the newly enhanced AGA graphics! Thrill! To the challenge of four long levels!

Drawing on classic film serials, the suave adventurer in the big hat takes on a series of global challenges. Parachuting into Amazonia, he must find a lost jewel and avoid being grabbed by the Goolus



Remember all the fuss about black & white movies being colourised? AGA remakes seem like a

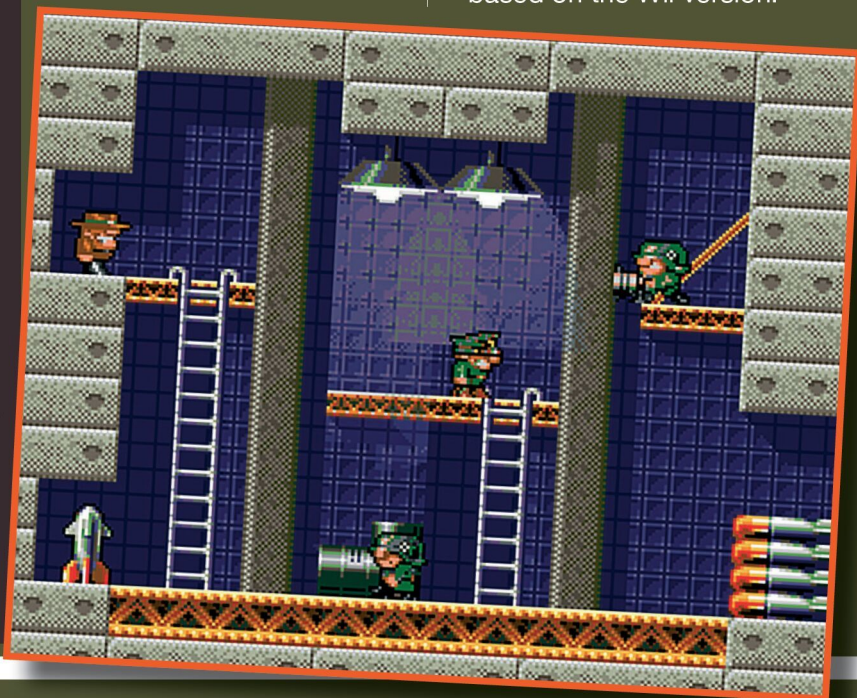
good idea, but they need to get the gameplay right. And this remake of the Core Design classic gets a lot of things right. The cutscenes are amusing, the more detailed backgrounds really stand out, and Rick remains a classic sprite with his huge hat. But... controls seem a little sticky at times, particularly when trying to climb up and down ladders. I was also a little disappointed with the death sequence, which lacks the original's impact (and has a poorer quality Waaaagh!). Trial and error will get you through most sections, and the four long levels remain a challenge. If you liked the original, you should enjoy this.

(Sounds painful – Ed). Flying into Egypt, everyone is doing the sand dance, but those enemies are fatal to the touch as Rick seeks another treasure. And like a certain professor of archaeology, this 1930s adventure concludes with taking on two levels set in a certain central European country. First, Rick avoids the patrolling soldiers and guard dogs in Castle Schwarzendumpf. And then, it is a short cable car ride to the Missile Base, where Rick must stop the rockets from bombarding England.

Rick is armed with a

revolver (holding six shots) and six sticks of dynamite. Enemies can be shot or blown up, but the dynamite is primarily used to blow up rocks and stones blocking his path. Every step must be considered carefully because the levels are filled with spikes, traps, falling rocks, and more hazards – including sleeping bats that can be poked awake with Rick's stick. This stick can also be used to trigger traps in certain places, knocking out enemies.

Z-Team has used the Scorpion Engine to update the Core Design original. The in-game graphics are based on the Wii version.

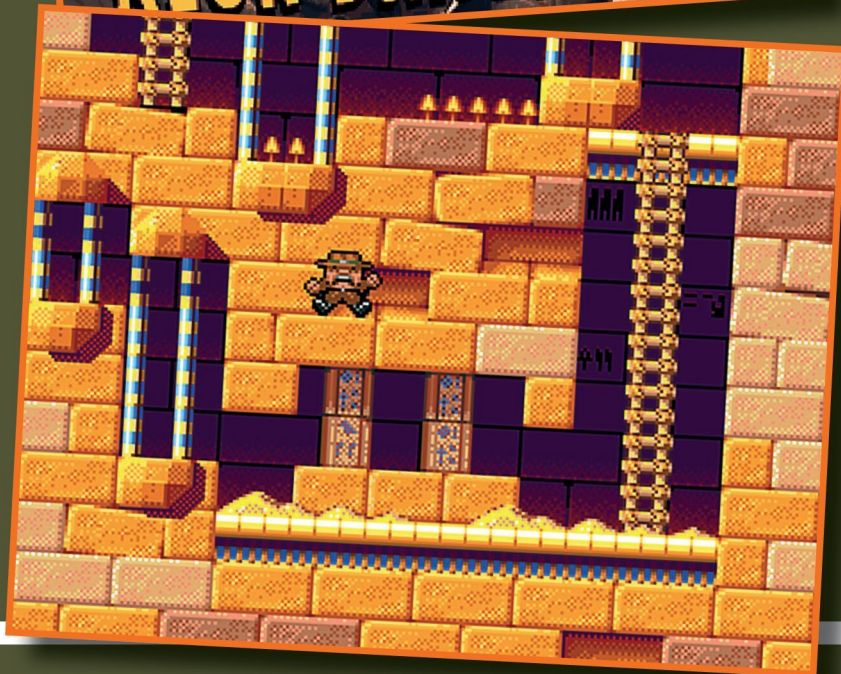
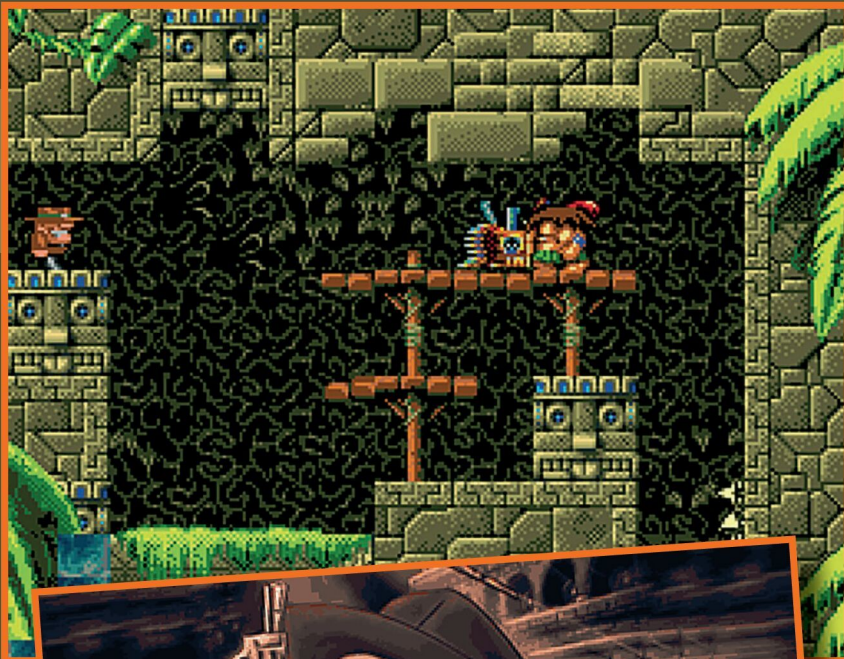


ZZAP! TEST



First impressions of this re-release really hit the mark, with the impressive intro, cutscenes, and enhanced level graphics. The

AGA face-lift really does make it seem like you are playing on a completely different computer. However, it doesn't quite have the same charm as the original game. The controls are ever-so-slightly loose, and the sprite collision is extremely brutal. Also, after deaths, there is a slight delay while the game restarts, which I felt affected the fluidity of the game. However, these are relatively minor points as the effort gone into the game is plain to see, and the result is something that should be lauded. Hats off to Core Design - whether or not you are a fan of the original games, this is definitely one to spin up and play.



PRESENTATION 90%

Choice of starting level, cinematic intro to each level, and lush title screen.

GRAPHICS 88%

Polished and prettier than the original while retaining the cartoon look.

SOUND 85%

Good tunes and decent FX, but some sounds disappoint.

HOOKABILITY 87%

A few control issues detract from the initial exploration.

LASTABILITY 84%

Sudden deaths and tricky traps can deter the player from coming back.

OVERALL 86%

It is raiding the Amiga's history for a classic, but it gets a very good AGA update.



The

SCORPION

Segment

Scorpion is a fast and flexible game-making engine for the Commodore AMIGA computers. In this regular series, we get the latest news and thoughts from the creator, Erik Hogan, as well as insights from some of its most experienced developers.

Engine Tuning with Erik

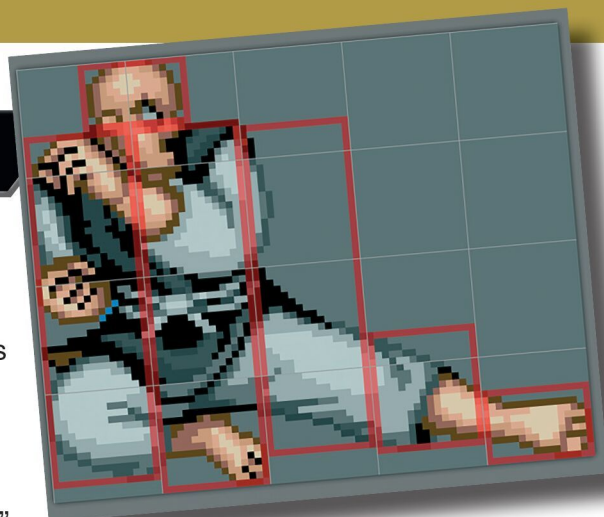
Thanks to our Patreon backers, MsMalik681 and BitBeamCannon, the recently released version 2023.2 improves performance, fixes an array of bugs, implements a handful of new features, and brings the Mega Drive output closer to matching the feature set of the Amiga engine.

The most significant new feature for Amiga is the new sliced blitting mode. For games like *Street Fighter*, where conserving memory is paramount, large animation frames are automatically sliced up into smaller

areas. In addition, this blitter mode is “non-interleaved”, so the blitter masks do not need to be repeated for each bitplane.

For both platforms, “And/Or” options make it easier to code complex conditions, and the Map Event system has been overhauled so that each event can have a trigger set for entering the zone, leaving the zone, staying in the zone, or interacting with the zone.

A side project that we’ve been working on recently is a ProTracker to



Sliced blitting mode in action with Street Fighter.

MML tool (https://github.com/earok/pt_2_mml). This will convert a ProTracker mod file for use in the Mega Drive “MDSDRV” driver used by Scorpion Engine, allowing for the same music to be used in multiple versions of the game.

Scorpion Engine 2023.2 Added Features

- Memory efficient sliced blitting mode for Amiga
- 8-pixel tall parallax slices for Mega Drive
- And/Or conditionals
- Improved flexibility of map events
- Ongoing bug fixes and performance improvements.

Project Focus : Street Fighter

When I was younger, I had an Amiga 600, and one game in my library was *Street Fighter*. I was extremely disappointed with this terrible conversion as I was a big fan of the arcade, and I felt it could have been a really good Amiga fighting game. I remember trying to redraw the characters in *Deluxe Paint* to see if I could do a better job than the official Amiga port.

Recently, while browsing YouTube, I came across two Amiga videos that really interested me. The first was the development of *Metro Siege*, and the second was a development video about a possible *Street Fighter 2* AGA port. From following BitBeamCannon, I discovered the Scorpion Engine, and I really liked the idea of working on an Amiga game using modern desktop tools. I use Linux, so excited and fortunate that Scorpion runs well, through Wine. Since I had a lot of experience with OpenBOR, I picked up Scorpion quite quickly.

My initial hurdle was trying to share 16 colours with all characters. I had a few failed attempts, but then Mike, from BitBeamCannon, helped me out using his palette from *Metro Siege*. He coloured the whole cast of *Street Fighter* using only 13 colours, which looked amazing, so I followed his template

for the character recolouring. Again, I hit a roadblock when I had to share the same 16 colours with the various stage backgrounds, which ultimately forced me to increase the colour depth of the game to 32 colours. Converting all the stages was still hard but not impossible. Recently I sponsored a feature for Scorpion Engine to compress graphics, which may allow me to target an Amiga 500 with 1MB Chip RAM. I am also no musician, but thankfully IM76 contacted me on the English Amiga Board to help with stage music.

The development is moving on nicely, and I hope to have a second demo with some real gameplay soon!



Mohammed Malik
(MsMalik681)

Developer Diaries with Mixel

In this regular section, Mixel provides some deeper insights into some of the features of Scorpion, and how they are used in his projects.

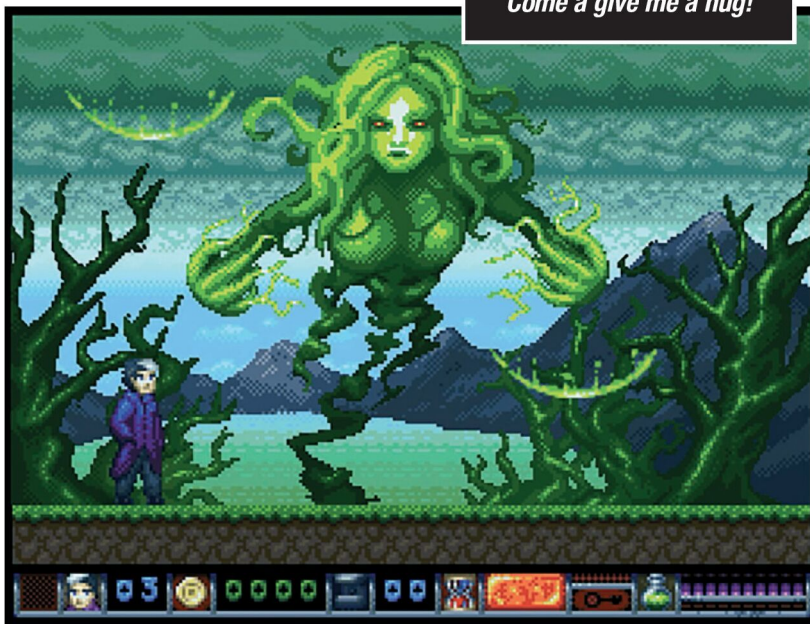


CMO Update

I'm back with an update on *Creeping Me Out: Hex Night*, a sprawling action platformer. It's been a busy month, but I've got quite a few things done. In the last issue, I mostly covered

is actually made of map tiles. Moving around bobs of this size is slow, so it's better to fake the enemy movement by moving literally everything else around them!

Come a give me a hug!



background graphics and large sprites. Recently, I've been working on levels later in the game and improving the logic for various enemies.

Here is a boss fight I've been working on. In this, and some of the other large bosses, the enemy

Camera Warp

This has been made easier by a relatively new Scorpion feature: Camera warp, which moves the camera and takes all of the on-screen actors with it, allowing for some interesting animated

effects!

In fact, moving the camera around the map is often a useful way of bodging all sorts of effects. I've recently been tweaking the "waves" in this sea level, which seem to violently rock the level around. In reality, there's an invisible actor following the player loosely (actor type: `Cpu_Pursuit_Direct`), much like the tiny fly enemies elsewhere in the game. On that actor's timer, it sets `Camera_X` and `Y` to its position instead of the player's! There's probably a more sensible way to achieve such an effect, but I love how in Scorpion you can approach things in whatever crazy way you feel like.

Background Parallax Differences

When working on the AGA build, I have a lot of backgrounds to adapt to the very different AGA system. For comparison, here's the same scene in both builds of the game...

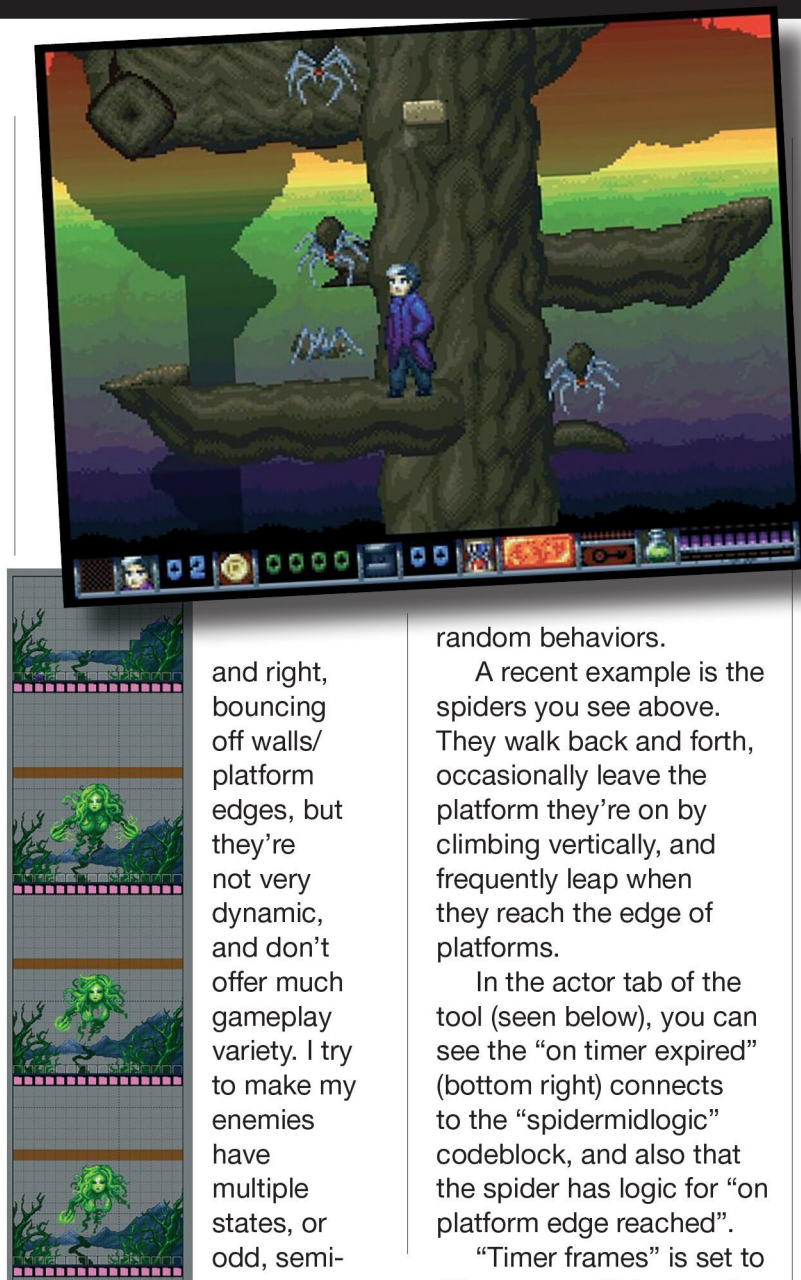
The OCS build has slices made of repeating

32px patterns, with many colours available, just a limit on how many can appear on each line. I use three colours per line generally, though four is also possible with some caveats, while the AGA build can have elaborate wide backdrops in 8 colours for two different bg layers or 16 colours for a single layer one.

Scorpion uses a wide image file to generate the OCS parallax backdrops; the above OCS example looks like this in a graphics editor (I cropped a lot off the right). The coloured columns on the left show the colours available on that line. These colours can be used in really interesting ways in the level.

Enemy Logic and Timers

One thing I've been conscious of in this game is making every enemy "worthwhile" in some way. There's always a place for enemies that just walk left



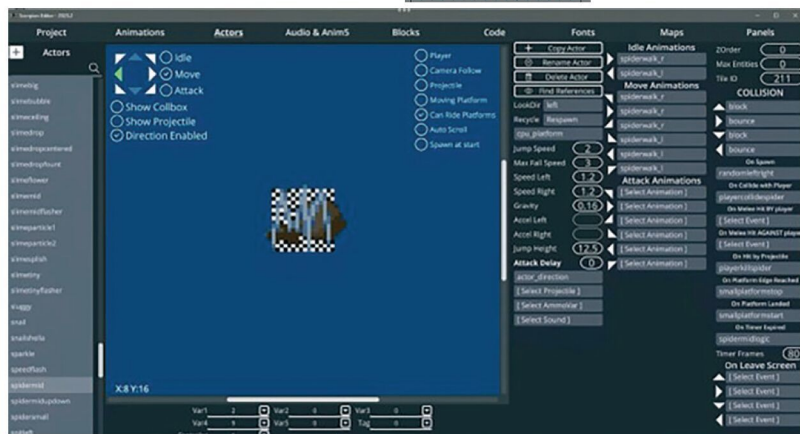
and right, bouncing off walls/platform edges, but they're not very dynamic, and don't offer much gameplay variety. I try to make my enemies have multiple states, or odd, semi-

random behaviors.

A recent example is the spiders you see above. They walk back and forth, occasionally leave the platform they're on by climbing vertically, and frequently leap when they reach the edge of platforms.

In the actor tab of the tool (seen below), you can see the "on timer expired" (bottom right) connects to the "spidermidlogic" codeblock, and also that the spider has logic for "on platform edge reached".

"Timer frames" is set to 80, so every 80 frames it runs the codeblock below, which checks which form the spider is in (standing or climbing), rolls a dice and has a 1/6 chance of climbing up/down and a 1/6 chance of leaping. This sort of random logic on a loop is used by the vast majority of enemies in the game to give them personality.



The 'actor' tab in Scorpion

CONFESSIONS

of an Amiga Scener

Welcome to the confession chamber, a place of amnesty where there's no jury, and no judgement passed. We're here to listen and hear the stories behind the events that have become legends over thirty years later. I'm Judge Drokk, founding and longest-standing member of the demo team Anarchy. Today I meet Cosy, one of the biggest names from the UK underground Amiga world. Cosy has a scene career that is basically a list of the coolest groups in the world, while proving that the Amiga isn't just a hobby, but a full-time job.



JD - Hi Cosy, so did you start with a Commodore 64 before the Amiga like many others did, including myself, or something different?

COSY- Yeah, I had a C64 back in the day, but I started off with a Commodore C16 followed by the C64, then Amiga,

though I did have an Atari 130EX and 800XL in between, but not for long. I was then Commodore all the way!

JD - What made you want a computer in the first place, did you see something that made you 'need' one?

COSY - I remember walking into a big store in town and seeing the C16 in its full glory, someone was playing a game called Blitz. I was

mesmerised. Then a few days later my Mum got me one, it was on 'buy now pay later' - haha!

JD - I remember Blitz, my first C64 game! - Did you buy games for your Commodore 64 or find other ways to get them, and if so what were they?

COSY - Yeah, I did buy some, the 1.99 range was all I could afford back in the day. I used to buy a magazine called Micro-Mart and started to find pen-pal contacts through the classified adverts and began to swap cassette tapes through the post. Later, I bought an Action Replay cartridge so I could copy the games. I also



*Dagger (left) with
Cosy Of Nemesis (right)*

SCORE 39

BEST 0

Blitz on the Commodore 16

remember acquiring an extra Commodore tape deck after I saw a company called Datel Electronics had made a little device to copy tapes between two decks. It was called a 'Clone-Master'. The fun started with Micro-Mart, swapping with contacts and those copy devices.

JD - Ah, Micro-Mart in the 80s, yes I remember it well. The adverts asking for like-minded people to swap ideas and programs, often requesting 'No-lamers please!'. I remember My first 'contact', it was 1987, he was great - and he had an Amiga too. The desire to see if the 'grass was greener on the other side' was becoming real. Do you remember your move to Amiga? Did you have to sell up to fund the move up to the next level?

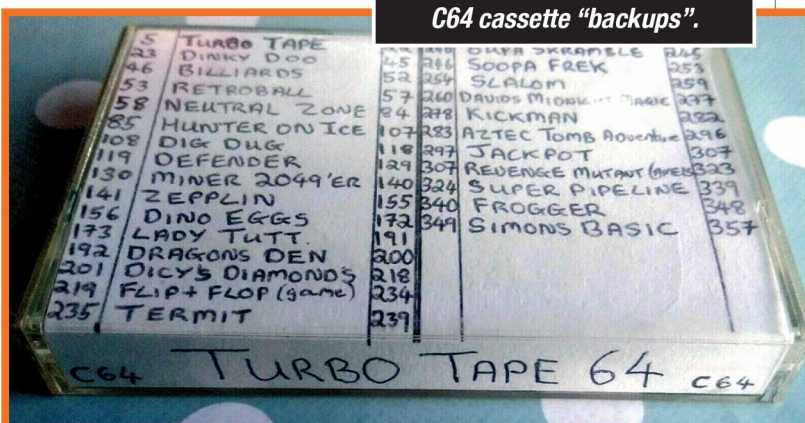
COSY - Yeah and also the Micro-Mart classifieds,

it was even free to advertise for "Contacts wanted!". No, I didn't have to sell the c64 to fund the A500. I'd seen the Amiga in an electrical store and it was £499 and I couldn't afford it but when I saw Deluxe Paint I just had to have it. My Nan was my guarantor and I never missed a payment! I had to wait a few weeks though, as they were out of stock, I was gutted. I'd bought a pack of blank discs with no Amiga - haha. As for getting the grasp of the Amiga - it was very easy, switch on insert disc, and play. The loading was very

quick, and you didn't have to rewind the cassette. After a month or two, I sold my C64 to get a 1084S monitor.

JD - How did you find the switch to Amiga from the C64? You'd have built up friends, contacts and a personal circle of acquaintances through the machine and were kind of starting again from scratch - did it take long to get a grasp of the Amiga world?

COSY - I just changed my Micro-Mart advert to "Amiga contacts wanted" instead of C64 contacts, plus many others were moving to the Amiga anyway. Micro-Mart continued to have a major role for me in the Amiga world. I'd seen an advert in the classifieds about a little 'get together' in a local pub in Doncaster. Inviting "Atari and Amiga users, all welcome to swap tips etc come to our meeting".

C64 cassette "backups".

It wasn't a copy party, only 10 guys were there, and three quid to get in. The organisers had a big store in Sheffield called Gem-Soft. A well-known shop, he sold originals, he didn't like to copy games. I met a guy selling a 'US Robotics' modem, and the rest is history. Moving from the C64 to Amiga was very easy, I learned a lot from other people, so it was easy to get used to and join in with the naughty stuff in the Amiga world.

JD - Did you have the intention right from the start that the 'normal' (some would say the honest) way of doing things when you got the Amiga wasn't going to be for you? Was it your plan that you were going to pick up where you had

**AMIGA PEN PALS wanted all over. Got the hottest. Quick reply, no lamers please. Write to Rory
Rosedace Avenue, Blackpool, Lancs,
FY4 4HR or ring 0253 64178.**

Contact-advert from MicroMart.

left off with the C64 contacts and copying - after all, the AMIGA came with a built-in disk drive, which was the device that opened up a new world for many when they got one for the C64?

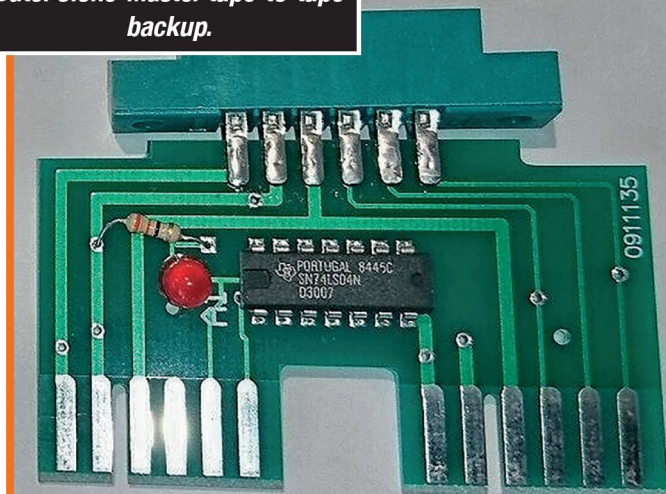
COSY - I never had an original Amiga game from start to finish, apart from the free DPAINT disc that you got with the machine. The first game I played was a copy of Gee Bee Air Rally, converted from the C64. Back then, I had bought loads of originals and had no interest in the pirate scene, like I said, 'Micro-Mart' got me into the naughty stuff. It was my

plan, however, to be naughty from the start on the Amiga. I remember my 1541 disc drive. When I got that, I never loaded a tape ever again, plus you could get more than a few C64 games on a floppy. Amiga was a fantastic machine to move on to, and still is. XCOPY was always on! Disk drives definitely opened up a new world for me especially, and many others no doubt! I'm still like that today - a USB stick for my A500 Mini with 4000 games and 35,000 demos, all for nothing.

JD - Yeah - it's hard to break the habit isn't it? For almost 35 years I have known you as 'Cosy', but did you have this nickname or 'handle' before Amiga or have you always been a fan of the world's greatest drummer?

COSY - Yeah, I had the nickname well before the Amiga days, for about 45 years now, actually. I was in a school band as a drummer, and my surname was Powell, so my music teacher called me Cosy Powell, after the famous drummer from the band Rainbow. His name

Datel Clone-Master tape-to-tape backup.





A Cozy Powell 7" single.

was spelt COZY, though, I didn't want to get done for copyright, did I? I've been in a few bands over the last 40 years, and the last time I played was just before COVID hit.

JD - So, you now have an Amiga and the 'warez' are coming in fast but how did you go from just getting the 'stuff' via swapping to moving up



Action Replay cartridge.

the ladder and getting into the group 'scene'?

COSY - I met a guy just up the road from me. I used to swap new stuff with him, and I had new bits he didn't have. One day I went up to see him and there I met No.5 from the Amiga team 'Magnetic Fields', who was there too. I had just got a copy of Operation Wolf, and he wanted a copy. He wanted me to keep in touch with him, he gave me a lift home, and we arranged to meet up again. He told me that he was in a group and that he and another guy were running it. He'd invite me to go to Doncaster and meet up with other people from his group. He would pick me up from Sheffield and then take me back home, never asking for fuel. Started to be a great friend and still is today. I think the other guy that was part of Magnetic Fields was

called Pete (aka Blaster). Pete left the group, and No.5 asked me to step into his shoes. That was my step up into the scene. A little while later, Magnetic Fields changed its name to Digital. That was how I actually got onto the ladder and began to climb. It was great to make new friends and meet other members of the group, such good days. I became Digital's 'modern trader/swapper', and No.5 was the group manager.

JD - You're now in an Amiga team and are also one of the 1% of Amiga owners that, at that point in time, have a modem. At the same time your 'contacts list' was growing and the amount of floppy disk parcels coming through the door was going up and up. Tell us about that, and just how big did your mailbag get?

COSY - Ok, so my parcels were a nightmare back then, but I always managed to get them done in a day. My local postman only delivered my letters, but a van came with a big sack of about 50-70 parcels a day. I even got my mum to help me with the parcels, but not the copying side. Most days, when returning my mail, I'd fill two postboxes as I couldn't get them all in

Cosy's 'Bertie Basset' pack.

one. In those days, you didn't need to weigh mail at a post office, so you could simply reuse the stamps by wiping the frank postmarks off because we'd cover the stamps with non-shiny invisible tape. The receiver would do the same at their end. Due to the volume of parcels, the post office asked me to get a P.O. box number which I did at a monthly cost. Having lots of mail contacts was very important to get our demos and intros out there.

JD - Yes, indeed, mail trading was a massive part of the scene's distribution network. I was once told off by a postman in the 80s for filling a post-box with parcels as he had to empty it on his round and carry them around for the duration of his delivery. You became the UK's

biggest mail trader and had more mail contacts than anyone else in the UK scene or possibly the world. If you didn't mail-trade with Cosy, then you at least knew someone who did. Receiving 'sendings' from Cosy was always a good post day. Did you ever lose count of how many contacts you had or ever have to turn anyone away, and did you have a 'little black book'?

COSY - Yeah, mine were coming by van each

day, guess it was too heavy for the postman back then. I don't know about the biggest in the world but definitely had the most mail contacts in the UK. I remember one contact was sending two parcels a day, I soon put an end to that. He was greedy ha-ha! One guy used to send me chocolate biscuits as a gift. Yeah, I definitely lost count of the contacts I had, it was getting out of control. I told everyone to make a flippable address label with mine on one side and theirs on the other to make things quicker and easier. I never turned anyone down as I was a good guy, it was only towards the end I asked them to keep parcel turnaround to about once a week. A few did try it on, but I held their parcel back for a few days. I didn't have an address book as it was evidence for 'you-know-who' (aka F.A.S.T). Thank god for reversible labels!

To be continued...

ANARCHY

are PROUD TO PRESENT
DEMO DOLLY MIXTURE NO.01
COMPILED AS ALWAYS BY COSY
CREDITS FOR THIS INTRO
CODE:ZARCH! LOGO:HARVIM
FONT:IGOR TUNE:NUKE
ONE TOO MANY AND YOU'LL BERTIE
GREETINGS GO THEN WHO FUCKING DESERVE IT?
ZARCH!



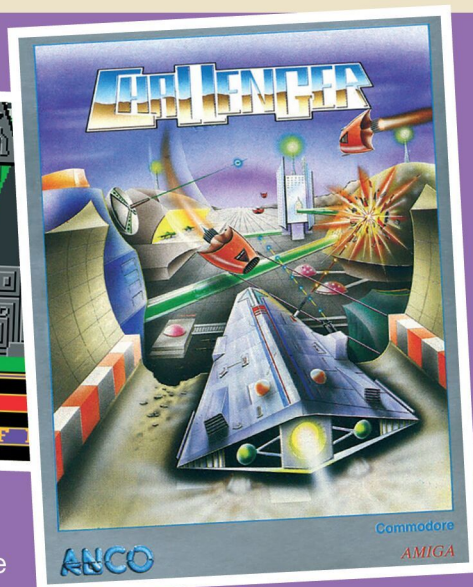
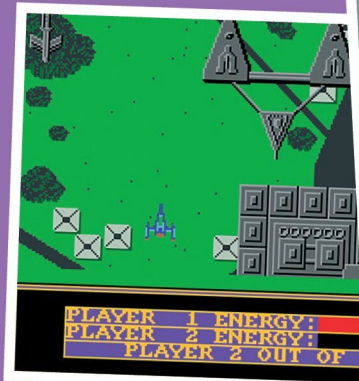
Fast Lightning Amiga Backup Software.

The best game inlay covers of 1987

There's been some stunning artwork gracing the covers of Amiga games over the years from various talented artists and photographers. Graeme Mason looks at some of his favourites from way back in 1987.

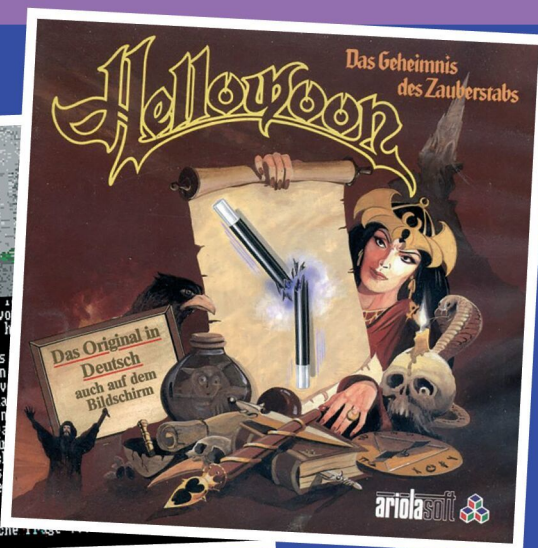
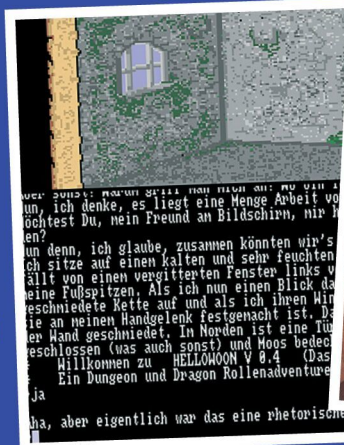
Challenger Kingsoft

The early years of the Amiga were sprinkled with unimpressive shoot-'em-ups, and sadly *Challenger* is another example of a by-the-numbers game that fails to take advantage of the new technology. I'm not sure if the original Kingsoft release even had a cover – this image is taken from the Anco re-release and is comfortably the best thing about the game. There are shades of the arcade classic *Zaxxon* here, as the player's triangular star destroyer, sorry, spacecraft, charges towards a busy enemy base. Beneath the cartoony simplicity, this cover has a nice impression of depth, buzzing enemy fighters swooping around, seemingly unaware of the player's approach. An action-packed cover that does its best to make up for the fact that *Challenger* the game is a bit of a damp squib.



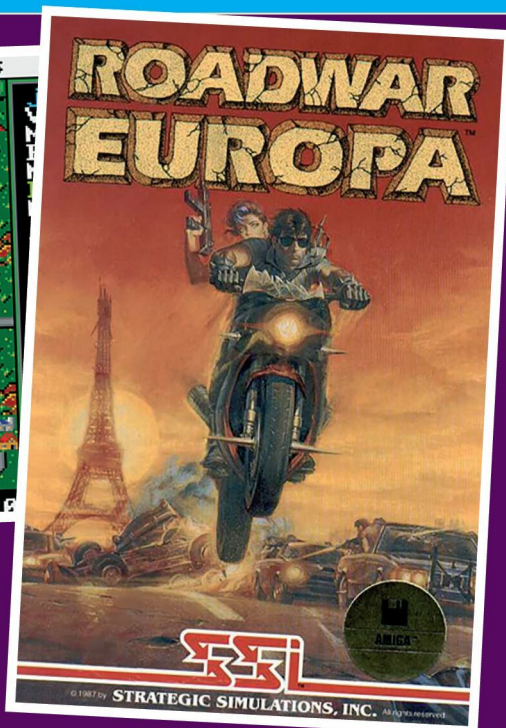
Hellowoon: The Secret Of The Magic Wand Ariolasoft

As far as I can tell, this graphical text adventure from German publisher Ariolasoft never saw release outside its native country. Certainly, I could not find an English language version online, so you'll have to excuse me if I get any of the finer points about this game wrong. Perhaps I should focus on the cover: an excellent piece of art, full of finely-drawn detail. An evil-looking enchantress is holding up a parchment, surrounded by various ephemera of the magical trade. An elegant leatherbound tome (no doubt containing pages of magical enchantments) is bookmarked by a small dagger; a sundial/ouija board type plate hints at macabre conjurations; a black crow and spitting cobra observe the scene; and there's a sealed jar, a despondent spirit trapped within its glass walls. But my favourite item is the skull, one eye remaining as if in some perpetual torture, reduced to the role of mere candlestick holder.



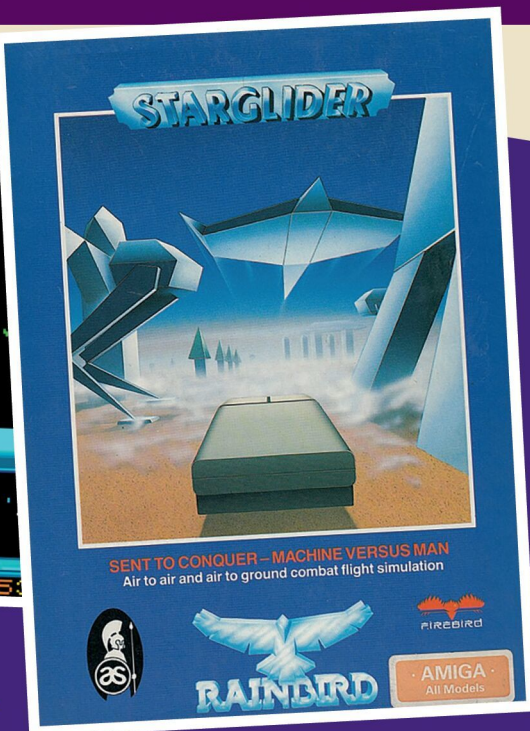
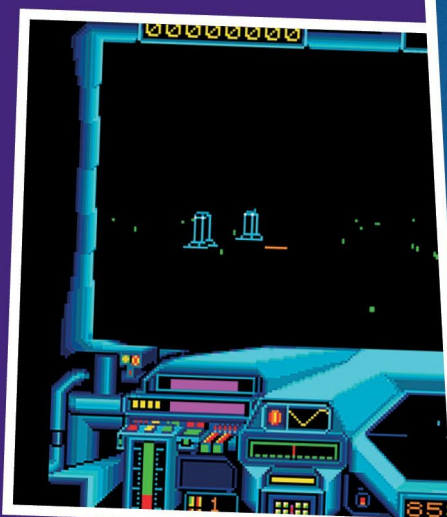
Roadwar Europa SSI

I featured the first game in this post-apocalyptic series, *Roadwar 2000*, the last time we visited 1987, and its sequel, released just a few months later, is just as good, both as a game and cover. The theme and gameplay here are similar: gather a gang of automobile-owning renegades and take on your rivals in a no-holds-barred battle on the ruined highways. As the name confirms, the action transplants from what's left of America to the wilds of Europe. *Roadwar 2000*'s cover is by Joseph Chiodo, and the artist repeats the image here, only with a motorcycle rather than a car. The hero sits astride the bike, sporting sunglasses and a determined grimace. Behind him sits his machine-gun-wielding chick as gang members battle it out in a frantic chase in the background. Yet the most striking part of this moody crimson cover is the Eiffel Tower, shrouded by the orange sun and a potent reminder of the civilisation that existed before *Roadwar Europa*'s devastating bio-war.



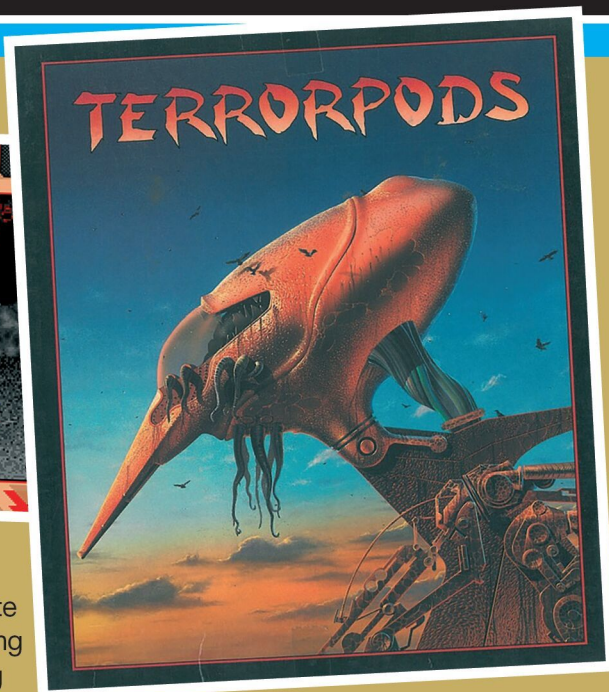
Starglider Rainbird

Rainbird's space epic was a smash hit back in 1987, and while the game itself is a rather over-glorified shoot-'em-up, I've always had a soft spot for its beautifully sharp and aesthetically austere cover art. The artist is Steinar Lund, and he's done an excellent job of taking the core imagery of the game – wireframe enemies and objects – and translating them into solid form while retaining the spirit of the originals. In the distance sit a futuristic forest and tower blocks, but the flying Starglider above and Walker to the left impresses the most. A real-world grounding is cleverly added with the inclusion of a mouse in the foreground, thrusting the player into this simplistic but highly atmospheric world. Rainbird's famous iconic blue border complements the azure texture of the picture, cementing another top-quality offering from the gifted Mr Lund.



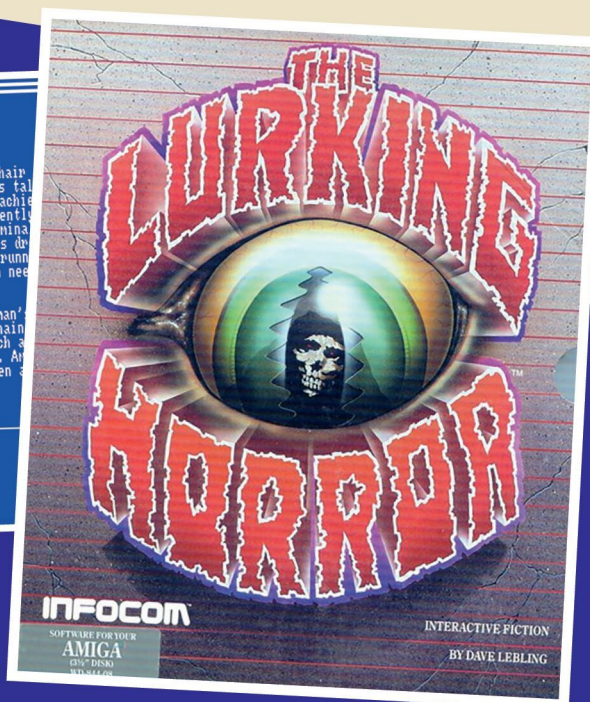
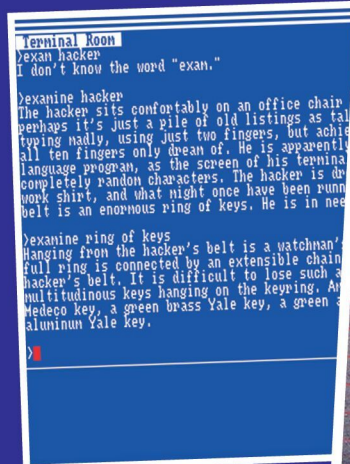
Terrorpods Psygnosis

Roger Dean's unique style was rarely as brilliantly displayed as in this cover of Psygnosis's 1987 game, *Terrorpods*. The game itself is a weird strategy-cum-resource-management effort that I could never quite get to grips with. But this cover, dominated by a giant robotic creature, is something else. A beautifully sapphire upper sky, peppered with delicate clouds, merges into a moody orange, the creature contrasting against the blue. Several tentacles hang from its face, giving the robot a fleshy organic theme as a daring flock of curious birds circle its head. Beneath the head, a complex set of gears and joints leads to a coiled pipe that presumably plugs into the creature's brain. Apparently, this image originated in the seventies, initially commissioned as part of a musical version of Jeff Wayne's *The War Of The Worlds*. Music's loss is videogaming's gain.



The Lurking Horror Infocom

Infocom tended to gravitate towards simple-yet-powerful boxart that intrigued the player without giving away too much about the game. The first time around, in 1987, I highlighted Bureaucracy and its closed service window. This time, it's the spooky *The Lurking Horror* and another cover that does little to explain the game. The *Lurking Horror* is set inside the GUE Tech University as the player investigates a strange department within the school, an apparent student suicide, and other macabre events. The centrepiece of this cover is an evil-looking eye, its gaze focusing on the viewer. Inside the colourful eyeball is a green bear trap, and there, peering out with malevolent red eyes, is presumably the skulking fiend of the title. The game's title cloaks the eye, and behind it – and I don't know if this is deliberate – is a lined page, signifying *The Lurking Horror*'s academic setting.



The background is a pixel art illustration. At the top, two large, dark, angular spaceships are shown in a greenish-yellow nebula. One spaceship on the right has the number '12' on its side. Bright green laser beams crisscross the sky. Below the spaceships, there are jagged, brown rock formations. In the bottom left corner, a city is visible with a prominent satellite dish and several buildings.

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